- **News / A2** Pirates free Filipino, Japanese seamen abducted in Malacca Strait
- **Metro / A19** AFP, police on full alert for Holy Week
- **Across / A15** Toll on drivers using NLEx: P17,000 a month
- **Business / B1** IMF urges BSP to increase interest rates
- **World / A8** DeLorean, developer of gull-winged car, dies at 80

Hero's welcome awaits Pacquiao despite defeat

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE PALACE is opening its door and rolling out the red carpet to give a hero's welcome to a fallen warrior.

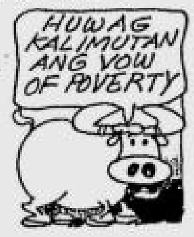
Bloodied and fighting with only one eye, boxing idol Manny Pacquiao showed the world the Filipinos' never-say-die spirit de-

HERO'S/ A6

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Priest plays stock market, dreams of BMW, Pajero

By Christian Esguerra


HUWAG KALIMUTAN ANG VOW OF POVERTY

PRIESTS have dreams for themselves, too.

For Fr. Ventura "Turing" Galman, his dreams are no different from those of a typical bachelor—a BMW,

PRIEST/ A4

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph
Tuesday, March 22, 2005 ★★ 44 pages 4 sections Vol. 20 No. 104 P18
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GMA rushes VAT approval

Senators expect special session quorum but doubt passage

INTERFAITH PRAYER RALLY
Representatives of different religions gather for an interfaith prayer rally for social change in front of Camp Bagong Diwa, Taguig, the scene of a recent police assault on Abu Sayyaf inmates who took over the jail facility.
ERIK ARAZAS

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Juliet Labog-Javellana

DESPITE warnings that lawmakers are unlikely to cut short their Easter break, President Macapagal-Arroyo has called for a three-day special session after the Holy Week because every week of delay in the value-added tax (VAT) reforms is costing the government P1.25 billion in foregone revenues.

Ms Arroyo issued Proclamation No. 811, which orders the holding of a special session from March 30 to April 1, after the Senate failed on Friday to finalize the bills raising the VAT rate from 10 percent to 12 percent and lifting the VAT exemptions on power and petroleum sales and the services of professionals like doctors.

The President had expected to complete the VAT reforms by March 18, or before the Lenten break of Congress.

"The President has made known her stand on this (the possibility of having no quorum in the special session), but the proclamation stays," said Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye at a briefing in Malacañang.

The Constitution allows the President to call for a special session to pass urgent legislation.

Albay Rep. Joey Salceda warned that the delay in VAT reforms would cost the country P1.25 billion in foregone revenues a week.

"The country will lose much more in terms of collateral damage to financial markets—weak peso, high interest rates, lower valuations and missed economic opportunities," Salceda said.

The peso and the stock market had slumped significantly since the Senate failed to pass the VAT reform bills last week.

"By calling a special session, the Arroyo administration sends a strong signal of its spirited pursuit of fiscal health," Salceda said.

The VAT reforms are expected to generate up to P65 billion in new revenues, or more than three-fourths of the P80-billion target that the President said would be enough to cure the fiscal crisis.

Major international credit rating firms earlier this year downgraded the Philippines, citing high government debt and weak finances. The downgrade increased the cost of borrowing for the government, which plans to raise $4 billion from international bond markets this year.

The last time the President called a special session, in early January this year, only a handful of lawmakers cut short their Christmas vacation to heed Malacañang's appeal to approve new tax measures.

Senators expect a quorum but

GMA/ A6

Tourists here to see Pinoys crucify selves

By Nikko Dizon and Christian V. Esguerra

IT'S CRUCIFIXION season and foreign tourists are in for a treat.

The moment tourists land at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia), they head for the information desk and ask: "Where can we find a crucifixion?" according to a longtime employee of the Department of Tourism.

European tourists are specially "curious and interested (to know) if men and women (here) are actually crucified to a cross," said Glenn Biscocho, who has been assisting tourists arriving at the Naia for the last 13 years.

Biscocho said tourist assistants like him often recommend the crucifixion reenactment in Pampanga.

There are also the *Pagpapako* (Crucifixion) in the towns of Baler and Casiguran in Aurora, but Pampanga is nearer and more accessible from Manila, he explained.

Health authorities have cautioned penitents against traditional—but risky—Holy Week activities, such as crucifixion and flagellation.

"(They're part of) tradition but from the health aspect, we do not encourage them," said Dr. Luningning Villa, head of the DOH's infectious disease unit.

TOURISTS/ A4

Slain priest hailed as true martyr

PRAY 'ALONG THE RILES'
Members of the Kalipunan ng Damayang Mahihirap hold the traditional Holy Week "pabasa" on the railroad tracks to ease the burden of the Filipino poor.
ERIK ARAZAS

By Armand N. Nocum

SOME MUSLIMS may believe that Abu Sayyaf Commanders Robot and Kosovo have gone to paradise, but it was the people they tortured and killed who were the "true martyrs."

Or has the world forgotten?

A Claretian priest and colleagues of the late Fr. Rhoel Gallardo raised these points yesterday as they questioned what they said were attempts to glorify the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) bandits killed during a failed jailbreak last week.

"We are losing sight of the true victims—Father Gallardo, the teachers and children tortured and molested by the Abu Sayyaf in Basilan. They were all defenseless. They were the real martyrs," Fr. Christian James Castro told the INQUIRER.

Former Claretian seminarian Allan A. Navida said portraying the ASG inmates slain by the police at the Camp Bagong Diwa prison as "martyrs" pained the relatives and friends of their victims even more.

"They call the ASG martyrs? But they had guns with them. The real martyrs are their defenseless and helpless victims who died excruciating deaths," he said.

Five years ago on Sunday, the ASG abducted Gallardo, then parish priest of Sumisip town and director of the Claret School in Basilan, and dozens of school teachers and pupils and brought them to the ASG's Camp Abdurazzak on Mt. Mahaji.

SLAIN / A4

US-WIDE TILT

RP tenor wins top prize at Met Opera

NEW YORK—A day after Filipino boxer Manny Pacquiao took a beating from Mexican Erik Morales in Las Vegas, another Filipino made waves in New York's classical music scene.

Tenor Rodell Aure Rosel, a 29-year-old Filipino music lover who used to sing at weddings and birthday parties back home, on Sunday got his chance to sing on the stage of the prestigious Metropolitan Opera House accompanied by a full orchestra.

That's not all. Rosel of Las Piñas City emerged one of the four winners of the Met National Council's 51st annual auditions, which have been described as similarly grueling as those of "American Idol."

And if history is any guide, Rosel will be back at the Met soon. World-acclaimed soprano Evelyn Mandac is the only other Filipino to have sung at New York's premier opera house.

Rosel, who is attending UCLA, and eight other rising opera singers were adjudged the best among more than 1,500 would-be stars who entered the US-wide competition. Those who made it through district-level competitions went on to regional auditions, and 22 semifinalists were then invited to New York, where they sang to piano accompaniment last week.

On Sunday, Rosel and each of the eight other finalists had a chance to sing two arias at the Met. When they were through, emcee Susan Graham—a celebrated mezzo-soprano who herself once competed in the auditions—an-

ROSEL performs during the Metropolitan Opera National Council Grand Finals in New York.
AP

RP TENOR/ A4

Library rescues works of women writers

By Elizabeth Lolarga
Contributor

A WOMAN journalist and essayist once cast a disapproving eye on the work of the 10-year-old Ateneo Library of Women's Writings (Aliww)—and said so to co-founders Edna Z. Manlapaz and Soledad Reyes.

Aliww is a facility which preserves the works of Filipino women writers and artists.

To historian and fictionist Carmen Guerrero Nakpil's less than encouraging comment, Manlapaz—who served as Aliww executive director for nine years—asked: "What do you mean?"

Nakpil answered: "You should be collecting the works of Nick Joaquin!"

Manlapaz and Reyes explained that Aliww was "merely trying to level the playing field, acting on the bias of male editors, publishers and anthologists against women's works."

Even extremely capable women like Nakpil.

"That I understand. I agree," Nakpil said, who then asked for an example of a woman writer who had been ignored and whose stature had been subsequently restored.

Reyes cited journalist Lina Flor who, she said, was often dismissed as a society columnist until she wrote Flor's biography that showed the vast range of her writings, which included "Gulong ng Palad," the most successful daytime serial in Philippine radio history.

Manlapaz's own example was the poet from Bicol, Angela Manalang Gloria, whom Jose Garcia Villa had dismissed because her poetry was unlike his.

Manlapaz also wrote a biography of Gloria. Her and Reyes' works not only led people to reevaluate Flor and Gloria's works but also introduced the lat-

LIBRARY/ A6

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Visayas and Mindanao including Palawan will have cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms while Northern and Eastern Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy.

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/03/22/05 SOURCE: PAGASA

Second FRONT PAGE

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Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Filipino, Japanese seamen released

By Volt Contreras

A FILIPINO and two Japanese seamen surfaced in Thailand on Saturday, five days after their abduction by pirates operating in the Malacca Strait, the Department of Foreign Affairs reported yesterday.

The Philippine Embassy in Bangkok confirmed the release of third engineer Edgardo Pagliawan Sadang, along with his Japanese captain and co-engineer, in the waters off the coastal province of Satun in southeastern Thailand.

Armed pirates had seized Sadang, Capt. Nabuo Inoue and chief engineer Shunji Kuroda of the Malaysian-registered tugboat Idaten in the Malacca Strait at dusk of March 14. The rest of the tugboat's crew later arrived safely in Malaysia.

The three were transferred by their captors to a Thai fishing vessel on Saturday and it was the fishing vessel's captain who alerted Thai marine police, according to the embassy.

In a briefing, DFA spokesperson Gilberto Asuque said the department had no information on whether ransom had been paid, explaining that it was "the task of their employer" to secure the victims' release.

Sadang, a 41-year-old native of Palawan, appeared to be in good condition and his passport was also recovered. Still in Thailand as of yesterday, he is expected to fly first to Penang, Malaysia, before returning to the Philippines, the DFA said.

Kuroda, 51, and Inoue, 56, also appeared to be in good health, according to Japanese foreign ministry official Masahiro Takagi.

"It's like I'm finally back in the world of the living," Kuroda said yesterday in a phone interview with NHK from his hotel in Thailand.

Inoue also spoke by phone with the shipping company's president and confirmed that he and his two abducted crew members were safely released, Takagi said.

Takagi declined to say whether ransom was paid.

Sadang, Kuroda and Inoue were greeted by Japanese officials and the company president, who traveled from Penang at the news of their release, to their hotel in Thailand.

NHK showed the three, dressed in matching navy blue polo shirts, walking out of their hotel escorted by Japanese and local officials.

Kuroda said the pirates took them to an island after changing boats more than five times, adding that the attackers "were very cautious."

"The night after we were kidnapped, we took a small boat to an island. We had to jump off the boat before reaching the shore and we waded through water to reach a sandy beach," he said.

He said he was fine, adding "I only suffered a cut on my foot when we had to walk through mud in jungles."

The tugboat was attacked March 14 off Malaysia's Penang island, near the opening of the pirate-infested channel that separates Indonesia's Sumatra island and peninsular Malaysia. *With AP*

FILIPINO seaman third engineer Edgardo Sadang (right) and his colleagues tugboat Capt. Nobuo Inoue (center) and first engineer Shunji Kuroda arrive in Thailand after they were released by their pirate-captors over the weekend.

AP

Police raise alert on 2 would-be car bombers

By Luige A. del Puerto

HEIGHTENING the tension during the Lenten season, police claimed yesterday two Abu Sayyaf terrorists trained in arming and detonating car bombs had been sent to Metro Manila and other key cities in the country.

Intelligence Group Chief Supt. Ismael Rafanan identified the two as Abu Ubayda and Ibnu Hassan, describing them as both in their early 20s. He said the alleged bombers were trained by the al-Qaida-linked Jemaah Islamiyah regional group in its camp in central Mindanao.

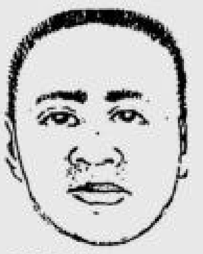
The latest disclosure brings to nine the number of Abu Sayyaf members police said had been ordered to carry out bombings in major cities during the Holy Week.

"They are separate from the seven men earlier identified by the police," Rafanan said. "These two are deadlier."

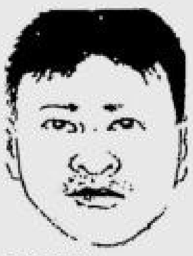
According to Rafanan, Ubayda and Hassan form a separate terrorist cell and were directly trained by a certain "Zaki," an Indonesian national tagged by the police as the training officer of the JI in the Philippines.

"They are deadlier because they were given formal training on explosives and bombing techniques. Zaki has directly trained them," Rafanan said.

He said intelligence officers were trying to find the two men.



HASSAN



UBAYDA

There has been no incidence of car bombing—a favorite weapon of Iraqi insurgents battling US occupation forces in that country—in the Philippines so far. The bombs which killed or wounded several people in the past were usually placed in bags and left under the seats of buses or planted in populated areas.

A car bomb usually causes more damage, according to Police Director Robert Delfin, chief of the Directorate for Intelligence. "(The damage) depends on how much explosives are packed in the car."

An intelligence official had earlier told the INQUIRER that Abu Sayyaf men who had trained on Mt. Cararao were capable of setting off car bombs.

"Yes, they know how to do it. They haven't used it yet, either because they do not have the money for it, or are just waiting for the right time," the official said, asking that he not be named.

Rafanan said the two men had trained rigorously in explosives-making on Mt. Cararao in central Mindanao, which can only be reached after a three-day walk from Marawi City.

This information was extracted from a suspect that authorities had arrested, the intelligence official said without elaborating.

On Friday, police confirmed that the Abu Sayyaf were indeed planning to explode bombs during the Holy Week, a warning first raised by the Department of Justice.

Top police officials said Abu Sayyaf leader Abu Solaiman had "reiterated" his call to followers to undertake bombings in key cities in the country, particularly in Metro Manila, after the police killed three of the group's top leaders in Taguig City on Tuesday.

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Abu won't answer raps in media

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

HE WOULD fight any war, except the kind fought in the media.

Armed Forces of the Philippines chief of staff Gen. Efren Abu refused to be drawn into a word war with the wife of an Army colonel who is under investigation for taking part in a P10.7-million Army contract contrary to military regulations.

Haydie Demetita-Lagnada, the wife of Lt. Col. Hilario Lagnada, had accused Abu of favoring a relative in the contract in a letter to the Commission on Appointments before which Abu is scheduled to appear for confirmation.

Abu yesterday refused to answer media questions about the complaint filed by Demetita-Lagnada before the CA.

"I will answer that in the proper forum because I don't want a media war," Abu told reporters in an interview at Fort Bonifacio.

Despite persistent questioning, Abu refused to budge.

Lagnada complained to the CA that Abu had cancelled the six checks that she received from the Army in December 2003 amounting to P2.7 million representing her share of a medical supplies deal.

Abu also had Lagnada's husband placed under investigation for possible court-martial for violating a department memo barring family members of military officers up to the fourth degree from doing business with the AFP.

Austerity marks Army celebration

AUSTERE rites marked the 108th anniversary of the Philippine Army yesterday at Fort Bonifacio.

None of the usual grand parades and exhibitions marked the celebration.

On hand were top defense and military officials led by Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz Jr. and Armed Forces chief of staff Gen. Efren Abu. No other government officials or foreign dignitaries had been invited as guests.

The program simply focused on recognizing soldiers who had distinguished themselves.

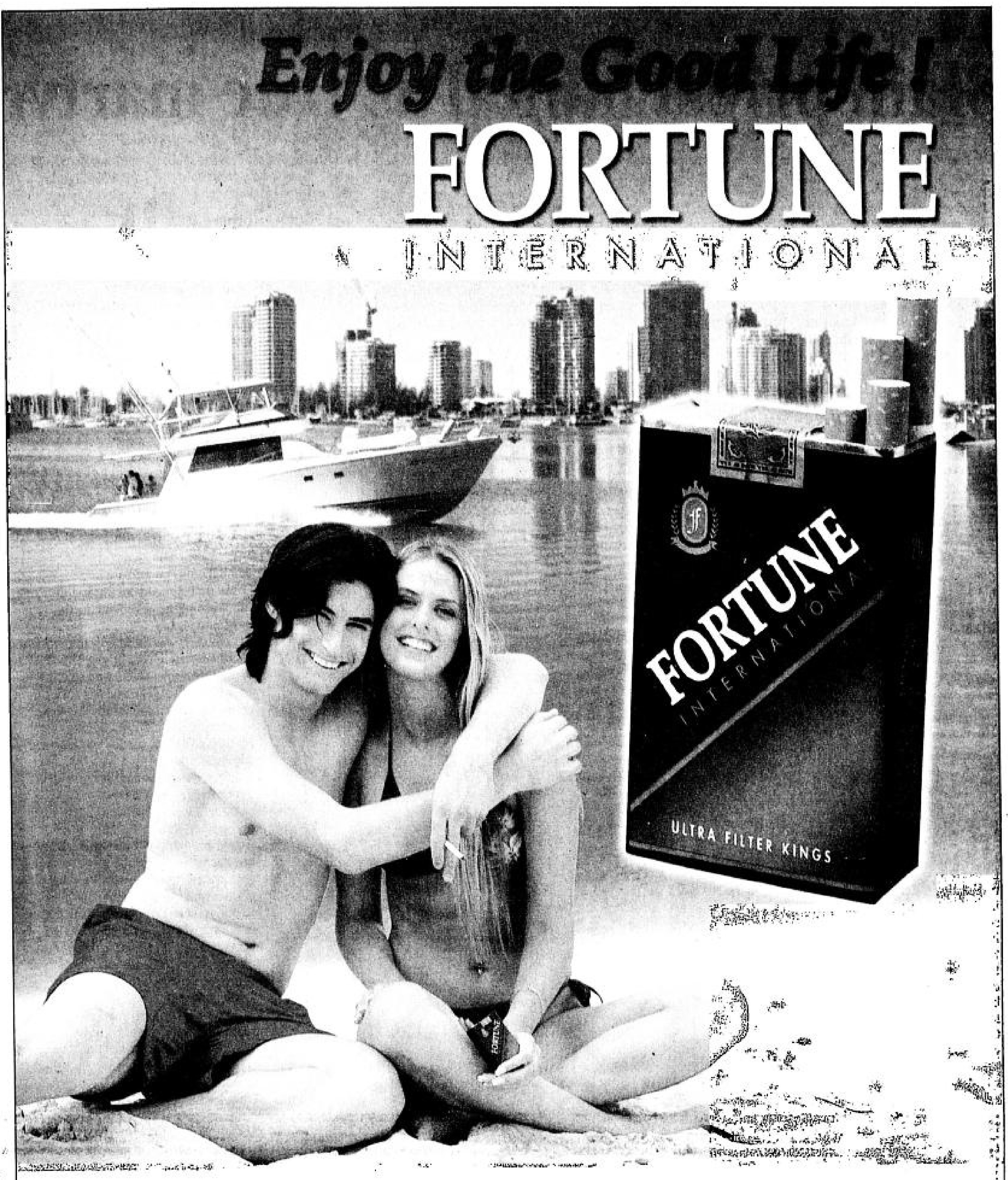
The awardees were led by Lt. Col. Dennis Villanueva, the 53rd Infantry Battalion (IB) commander who was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Conduct Star Medal.

Army chief Lt. Gen. Generoso Senga presented the medal to Villanueva's widow, Evangeline.

Senga did not say how much was saved but Abu estimated the Army spent only about 10 percent of what it usually spent on such celebrations.

Maj. Rosante Larios, commander of the 26th IB, 4th Infantry Division, received the Distinguished Service Star.

Other awardees who received the Gold Cross for gallantry in combat were Capt. Leo Diaz, team leader of the 2nd Special Forces Battalion, Special Forces Regiment, Special Operations Command (Socom); SSgt. Fernando Abadines, squad leader of the Striking Force of Charlie Co., 1st Provisional Battalion, 7th ID, and Pfc. Muhaimin Muanih of Bravo Co., 27th IB, 6th ID. *Dona Z. Pazzibugan*



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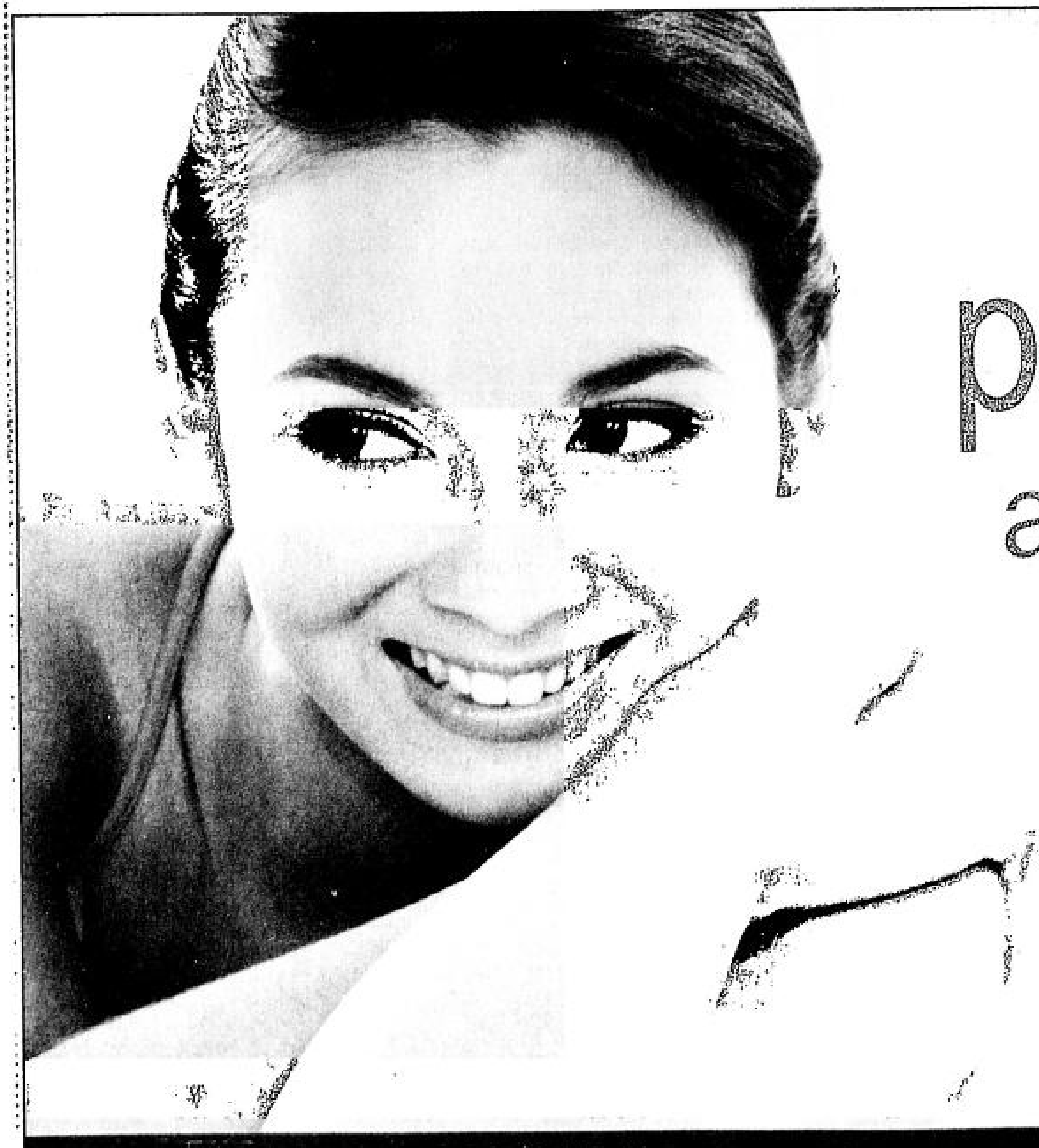

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Slain priest hailed as true martyr

From page A1

There, according to accounts by churchmen and police later, the 34-year-old priest was tortured after he rejected offers by the ASG to free him if he renounced his faith.

Nails ripped off

He was also beaten when he prayed the rosary and when he objected to the ASG bringing out some of the women hostages to be raped.

When soldiers overran the ASG camp, they found Gallardo's brain had been blown off. He had also been shot in the back and in the shoulder.

The nails on his index fingers and toes had been ripped out.

Killed with Gallardo were teachers Editha Lumome, Annabelle Mendoza and Ruben Democrito.

Birthday present for Erap

The ASG also executed teachers Dante Uban and Nelson Enriquez as "birthday gifts" for then President Joseph Estrada.

State Prosecutor Peter Medalle, who is handling the criminal charges against the ASG, said it was Alhamser Manatad Limbong, alias Commander Kosovo, who had tortured Gallardo by pulling out his nails.

"If you survive this ordeal, this will be my remembrance to you," Medalle quoted Limbong as supposedly telling Gallardo. Medalle said this was related to him by an ASG source and witnesses to the incident.

Beaten senseless

Kosovo, who led the March 14 failed jailbreak, and Ghalib Andang (Robot) were among the 22 suspected ASG members killed by police. Their relatives, as well as Muslim religious leaders and residents at the Muslims' Maharlika Village in Taguig City, later buried them in rites accorded to martyrs.

"He [Gallardo] was first beaten senseless when he protested the decision of the ASG to drag teacher Winifer Selorio, who was eight months pregnant, into the mountains," said Castro, director of the Claret School of Zamboanga City.

Inspiration to others

Castro lashed out at what he described as an "overkill" effort by some human rights groups to protest the one-sided killing of the ASG men. He said these groups were nowhere around when the ASG executed Gallardo and the others.

"In spite of the beatings and torture, he never gave up his faith or on life," Castro said.

For his steadfastness, Gallardo served to strengthen the other hostages, who were all on the verge of giving up all hope during their weeks of captivity.

Delfin Aguilar, a former Claretian seminarian who was close to Gallardo, said that although the relatives of the ASG men were entitled to their beliefs, only Gallardo's death could be seen as a true martyrdom.

Genuine martyr's death

"He gave a meaning to his martyrdom—he suffered and died for others. From the Christian point of view, he is the true martyr," he said.

Even while they were in the seminary, Castro and Aguilar recalled that Gallardo was known as the "little Claret" for his Catholic fervor and pious ways.

Gallardo was seen as the seminarian who most typified the spirit of Saint Anthony Mary Claret (1807-1870), founder of the Missionary Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Claret himself endured persecution toward the end of his life.

Aguilar, a member of an organization of former Claretian priests and seminarians called X-Cla, said they held up Gallardo as an inspiration for their planned charitable work to help promote priestly vocations.

Apart from Gallardo, the martyrs were the countless victims of the atrocities of the ASG, Navida said.

Priest plays stock market, dreams of BMW, Pajero

From page A1

a Lexus sedan, a Pajero and a nice vacation house in Baguio.

But no ordinary dreamer, the 50-year-old priest is working to get them.

Father Turing, the well-loved parish priest of Santissima Trinidad in the City of Malolos, has been investing in the stock market for more than five years now.

He swears he has not made a fortune out of his initial P8,000 investment. And he says he has no plans of building one, anyway.

"I just want to keep something for myself so I won't have to beg even for my basic needs," he says.

Not many people know about his "other work." But he's not actually keeping it a secret; he's just not volunteering the information.

Father Turing doesn't want to be condemned by those who believe that priests are not supposed to make money for themselves.

"It's discouraged," he says. "But there's really nothing wrong with it as long as it will not affect your primary duty as a priest."

Roadblock

Those who really know him do not doubt his loyalty to his vocation, except a group of elders at Santissima that has been trying to kick him out of the parish.

Father Turing considers them a roadblock to his ministry in the small city of what he considers intensely devout but at times misguided Catholics.

The Diocese of Malolos sent the priest to Santissima in November 2000 to build a parish there. The number of parishioners has grown over the years. A chapel can no longer accommodate them.

"It was no easy task," Turing says. "Many people didn't want the idea. Before I arrived, six priests had tried in vain. They all quit out of frustration."

He is up against several forms of Catholic "malpractice" deeply embedded among residents, such as placing a crucified penitent atop the altar on Good Friday. Neither is he in favor of people preferring the "*pasyon*" over Mass.

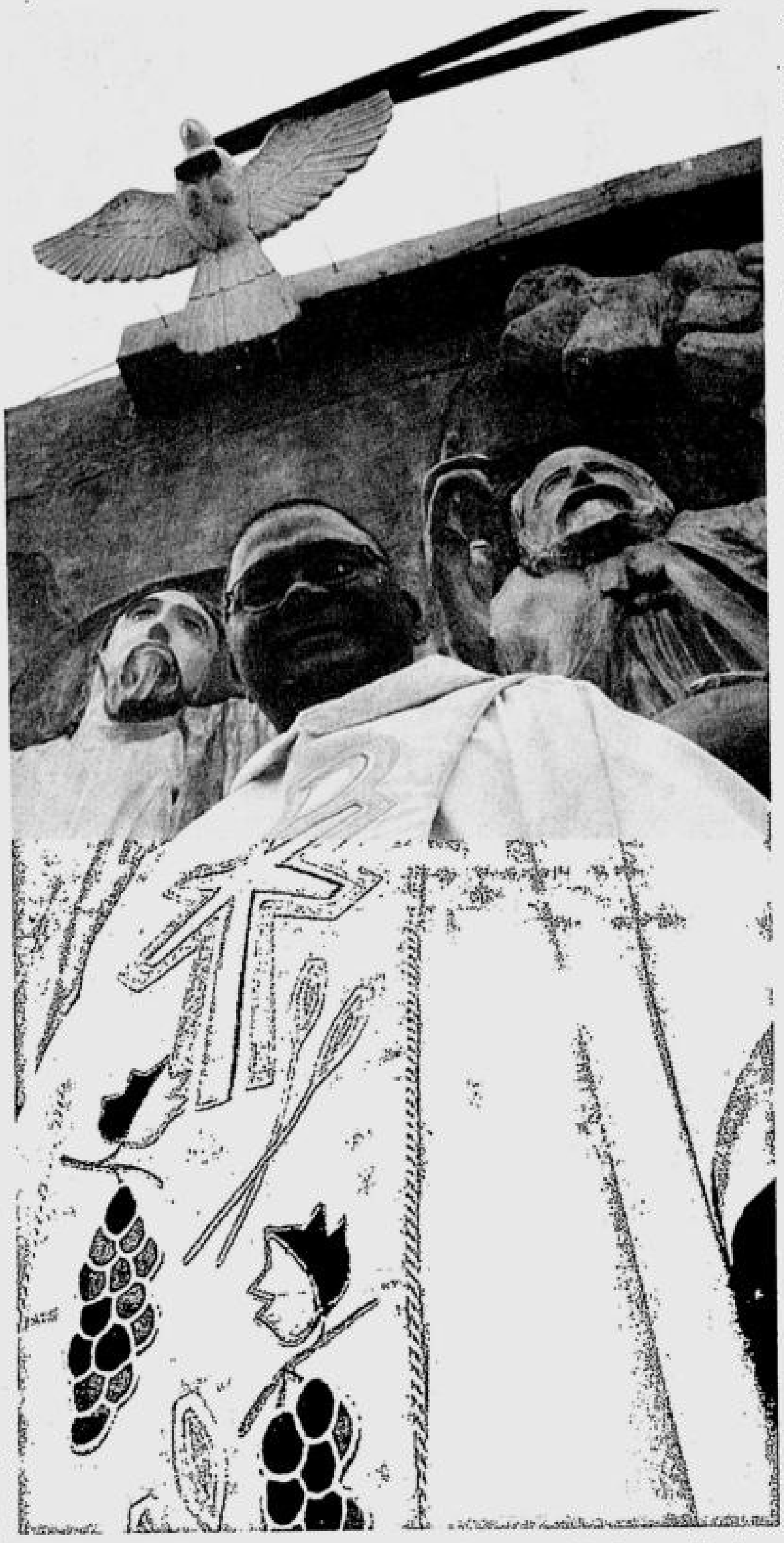
Threats

Ever driven, Father Turing took everything as a challenge. The elders allegedly started sending him death threats. He sued them.

He later convinced the owner of a nearby resort to donate a worn-out bowling center where the parish church now stands.

But the lot, it turned out, had been mortgaged to a woman lawyer. Her terms were clear—pay P4 million or move out.

"I cried then," the priest recalls. "Where would I get the money? I even thought of selling my kidneys or an eye just to raise the amount."



FR. VENTURA "Turing" Galman: I just want to keep something for myself so I won't have to beg even for my basic needs.

REM ZAMORA

He had personal savings then. But they were definitely not enough to significantly reduce the mortgage.

Miracles

Then came what he calls a "series of miracles" from Santissima.

A woman offered to pay more than half of the lien. She told the parishioners to just pay her back on their own terms.

The problem nearly solved, Father Turing mobilized the parishioners to raise the money to cover the balance.

He set up a program dividing the parish compound into several plots. People were urged to "buy" plots for P5,000 each, for which they would become "honorary owners." Proceeds went to the parish.

Father Turing and other devotees also went around neighboring parishes to practically beg. He is optimistic they could soon pay the full P4 million.

Intense drive

To him, the battle is nearly won. And it would not have been so had it not been for his intense drive. To those who know him, that's vintage Turing.

He says the same attitude got him to invest in stocks.

"It's really not about the money," he swears. "I want to prove that I can make something out of nothing, that something big can come out of something small if only you nurture it."

He first noticed his insatiable drive for personal achievement in the seminary.

"When I was in the seminary, my classmates were very bright," he says. "I wanted to prove that I was also intelligent like them. I wanted to prove that I could get something just by thinking."

Later, he thought of gauging himself by trying to earn money by practically "doing anything."

Enter the stock market, an idea he got from a friend.

Father Turing has not been to the Philippine Stock Exchange and he would probably get lost there. He has not seen the broker he's been dealing with since the late 1990s. He only phones him from Malolos.

But you can't fool him on the ins and outs of investing in stocks. He knows which stock will most likely shoot up or plunge, depending on a political crisis, controversy or natural disaster. He knows the risks.

"When a tsunami hit South Asia, I knew tourists would move to the Philippines," he says. "So I bought stocks which I thought would sell at a much higher price once the foreigners start coming in."

Hope

One of Father Turing's most valued possessions is a ledger of all his stock market transactions. Written in bold letters on the cover is the title "Pag-asa ng Bukas" (Hope of Tomorrow).

"Hope, that's something nobody can take away from me," he says.

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Japanese tourists often proceed to Cebu because they are also interested in business opportunities there. Koreans, on the other hand, favor the upscale Dos Palmas and El Nido resorts in Palawan.

Is it safe?

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Years ago, tourists would not inquire about safety and security, Biscocho noted.

"But now, it's the next thing they ask: Is it safe in Manila?" he said, adding that most tourists are actually more afraid of staying in Metro Manila than in the provinces.

Usually, Biscocho said, he would encourage tourists to stay overnight in Metro Manila to get a feel of the capital, and then decide if they want to stay longer or move on to other parts of the country.

Slain priest hailed as true martyr

From page A1

There, according to accounts by churchmen and police later, the 34-year-old priest was tortured after he rejected offers by the ASG to free him if he renounced his faith.

Nails ripped off

He was also beaten when he prayed the rosary and when he objected to the ASG bringing out some of the women hostages to be raped.

When soldiers overran the ASG camp, they found Gallardo's brain had been blown off. He had also been shot in the back and in the shoulder.

The nails on his index fingers and toes had been ripped out.

Killed with Gallardo were teachers Editha Lumome, Annabelle Mendoza and Ruben Democrito.

Birthday present for Erap

The ASG also executed teachers Dante Uban and Nelson Enriquez as "birthday gifts" for then President Joseph Estrada.

State Prosecutor Peter Medalle, who is handling the criminal charges against the ASG, said it was Alhamser Manatad Limbong, alias Commander Kosovo, who had tortured Gallardo by pulling out his nails.

"If you survive this ordeal, this will be my remembrance to you," Medalle quoted Limbong as supposedly telling Gallardo. Medalle said this was related to him by an ASG source and witnesses to the incident.

Beaten senseless

Kosovo, who led the March 14 failed jailbreak, and Ghalib Andang (Robot) were among the 22 suspected ASG members killed by police. Their relatives, as well as Muslim religious leaders and residents at the Muslims' Maharlika Village in Taguig City, later buried them in rites accorded to martyrs.

"He [Gallardo] was first beaten senseless when he protested the decision of the ASG to drag teacher Winifer Selorio, who was eight months pregnant, into the mountains," said Castro, director of the Claret School of Zamboanga City.

Inspiration to others

Castro lashed out at what he described as an "overkill" effort by some human rights groups to protest the one-sided killing of the ASG men. He said these groups were nowhere around when the ASG executed Gallardo and the others.

"In spite of the beatings and torture, he never gave up his faith or on life," Castro said.

For his steadfastness, Gallardo served to strengthen the other hostages, who were all on the verge of giving up all hope during their weeks of captivity.

Delfin Aguilar, a former Claretian seminarian who was close to Gallardo, said that although the relatives of the ASG men were entitled to their beliefs, only Gallardo's death could be seen as a true martyrdom.

Genuine martyr's death

"He gave a meaning to his martyrdom—he suffered and died for others. From the Christian point of view, he is the true martyr," he said.

Even while they were in the seminary, Castro and Aguilar recalled that Gallardo was known as the "little Claret" for his Catholic fervor and pious ways.

Gallardo was seen as the seminarian who most typified the spirit of Saint Anthony Mary Claret (1807-1870), founder of the Missionary Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Claret himself endured persecution toward the end of his life.

Aguilar, a member of an organization of former Claretian priests and seminarians called X-Cla, said they held up Gallardo as an inspiration for their planned charitable work to help promote priestly vocations.

Apart from Gallardo, the martyrs were the countless victims of the atrocities of the ASG, Navida said.

Priest plays stock market, dreams of BMW, Pajero

From page A1

a Lexus sedan, a Pajero and a nice vacation house in Baguio.

But no ordinary dreamer, the 50-year-old priest is working to get them.

Father Turing, the well-loved parish priest of Santissima Trinidad in the City of Malolos, has been investing in the stock market for more than five years now.

He swears he has not made a fortune out of his initial P8,000 investment. And he says he has no plans of building one, anyway.

"I just want to keep something for myself so I won't have to beg even for my basic needs," he says.

Not many people know about his "other work." But he's not actually keeping it a secret; he's just not volunteering the information.

Father Turing doesn't want to be condemned by those who believe that priests are not supposed to make money for themselves.

"It's discouraged," he says. "But there's really nothing wrong with it as long as it will not affect your primary duty as a priest."

Roadblock

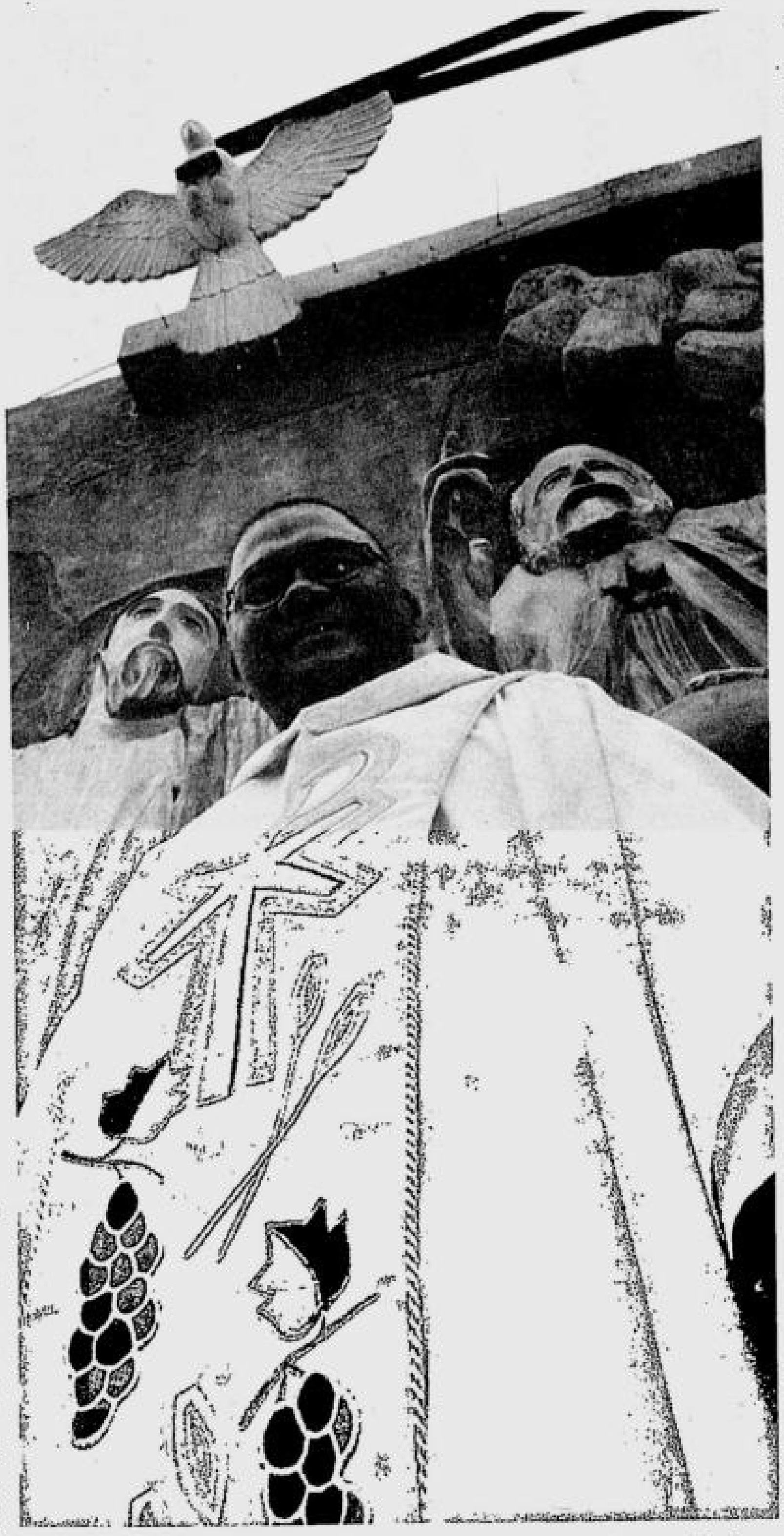
Those who really know him do not doubt his loyalty to his vocation, except a group of elders at Santissima that has been trying to kick him out of the parish.

Father Turing considers them a roadblock to his ministry in the small city of what he considers intensely devout but at times misguided Catholics.

The Diocese of Malolos sent the priest to Santissima in November 2000 to build a parish there. The number of parishioners has grown over the years. A chapel can no longer accommodate them.

"It was no easy task," Turing says. "Many people didn't want the idea. Before I arrived, six priests had tried in vain. They all quit out of frustration."

He is up against several forms of Catholic "malpractice" deeply embedded among residents, such as placing a crucified penitent atop the altar on Good Friday. Neither is he in favor of people preferring the "*pasyon*" over Mass.



FR. VENTURA "Turing" Galman: I just want to keep something for myself so I won't have to beg even for my basic needs.

REM ZAMORA

Threats

Ever driven, Father Turing took everything as a challenge. The elders allegedly started sending him death threats. He sued them.

He later convinced the owner of a nearby resort to donate a worn-out bowling center where the parish church now stands.

But the lot, it turned out, had been mortgaged to a woman lawyer. Her terms were clear—pay P4 million or move out.

"I cried then," the priest recalls. "Where would I get the money? I even thought of selling my kidneys or an eye just to raise the amount."

He had personal savings then. But they were definitely not enough to significantly reduce the mortgage.

Miracles

Then came what he calls a "series of miracles" from Santissima.

A woman offered to pay more than half of the lien. She told the parishioners to just pay her back on their own terms.

The problem nearly solved, Father Turing mobilized the parishioners to raise the money to cover the balance.

He set up a program dividing the parish compound into several plots. People were urged to "buy" plots for P5,000 each, for which they would become "honorary owners." Proceeds went to the parish.

Father Turing and other devotees also went around neighboring parishes to practically beg. He is optimistic they could soon pay the full P4 million.

Intense drive

To him, the battle is nearly won. And it would not have been so had it not been for his intense drive. To those who know him, that's vintage Turing.

He says the same attitude got him to invest in stocks.

"It's really not about the money," he swears. "I want to prove that I can make something out of nothing, that something big can come out of something small if only you nurture it."

He first noticed his insatiable drive for personal achievement in the seminary.

"When I was in the seminary, my classmates were very bright," he says. "I wanted to prove that I was also intelligent like them. I wanted to prove that I could get something just by thinking."

Later, he thought of gauging himself by trying to earn money by practically "doing anything."

Enter the stock market, an idea he got from a friend.

Father Turing has not been to the Philippine Stock Exchange and he would probably get lost there. He has not seen the broker he's been dealing with since the late 1990s. He only phones him from Malolos.

But you can't fool him on the ins and outs of investing in stocks. He knows which stock will most likely shoot up or plunge, depending on a political crisis, controversy or natural disaster. He knows the risks.

"When a tsunami hit South Asia, I knew tourists would move to the Philippines," he says. "So I bought stocks which I thought would sell at a much higher price once the foreigners start coming in."

Hope

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BEST COPY AVAILABLE

SAUDI Minister Ali Bin Ibrahim Al-Naimi, President Arroyo, former Energy Secretary Vince Perez and new Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla (from left) talk oil after Lotilla took his oath of office yesterday in Malacañang. EDWIN BACASMAS

RP can't expect Saudi oil discount

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

IT'S STRICTLY business for the world's biggest oil producer, Saudi Arabia, which will not sell its prized commodity at a discount even to developing countries like the Philippines.

Visiting Saudi Minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources Ali Bin Ibrahim Al-Naimi yesterday said world crude oil prices were too high but his country could not do anything to ease prices even if it raised its output.

After a luncheon meeting with President Macapagal-Arroyo in Malacañang, Al-Naimi met with reporters in a briefing where he cited Saudi Arabia's concern for developing countries in keeping with its moderate stand on global oil politics.

"We seek a reasonable price for the oil producer and the consumer and assure that world economic growth is not negatively impacted, particularly the economic growth of developing nations," said Al-Naimi, who took note of the "strong relationship" between Saudi Arabia and the Philippines as evidenced by Saudi Aramco's 40 percent stake in the country's biggest oil refiner Petron Corp.

But when asked if Saudi Arabia gave discounts based on its concern for developing countries and its "special relationship" with the Philippines, Al-Naimi bluntly said: "There are no discounts anywhere in the world. This is an international oil market and as far as I know nobody is discounting."

Al-Naimi made the comment just a few minutes after President Arroyo profusely thanked Saudi Arabia for "doing everything within its power to keep the price of oil down."

In her speech, the President said Al-Naimi informed her that, "His royal highness, the king of Saudi Arabia, gave specific instructions to ensure that developing countries like the Philippines did not suffer from high oil prices."

The President also praised Saudi Arabia for insisting on raising oil production among Opec member countries. But Al-Naimi told reporters that while Saudi Arabia found oil prices too high and it wanted prices to go down, increasing production was not the answer.

"We would be very happy to sell 11 million barrels per day today rather than 9.5 million. Do we have a customer? The answer is yes, if we have a customer. The fact that the price is on the increase has many different contributors to it. There is a perception in the market that there will be shortage of supply in the immediate future. I have tried to dispel that notion," Al-Naimi said. "I believe the actual production is probably already higher to meet the growing demand worldwide."

Al-Naimi, who is also chair of Saudi Aramco, also said that while he did not agree with the proposal for the government to regain control of Petron, Saudi Aramco would oblige by selling its stake.

"If the government of the Philippines believes buying back 40 percent is in its interest, we don't like it but that is the decision of a sovereign nation," Al-Naimi said. "Decisions of government are sovereign, and they do not impact on relationships between customers and ourselves."

Solon wants envoys' heads for failing to help OFWs

ANAKPAWIS party-list Rep. Crispin Beltran yesterday called for the suspension of Philippine Embassy officials in Jordan for their alleged failure to repatriate at least 50 abused overseas Filipino workers (OFWs).

Beltran said in a statement that Philippine Ambassador to Jordan Ruperto Dizon and three other officials should be suspended and investigated for allegedly ordering OFWs—who had fled from their employers due to abuse—to return to their recruitment agencies in Jordan if they could not pay their deployment and repatriation expenses.

"These officials should be investigated. But prior to the investigations, they should also be suspended from duty," said Beltran, a veteran labor leader-turned-lawmaker.

He noted that at least two Filipino workers were forced to return to their abusive recruitment agencies this month although the government had a P100-million Assistance to Nationals (ATN) fund which covers the repatriation of OFWs.

Beltran said that the 50 or so OFWs who wanted to be repatriated included two pregnant women and a rape victim.

"It's appalling that the Philippine Embassy and the DFA (Department of Foreign Affairs), despite the existence of the (ATN fund)... continue to refuse the distressed Filipino workers' appeal for repatriation," he said.

Besides Dizon, the other erring officials were Consul Aric Arevalo, embassy administrative officer Edmundo Venturanza and welfare officer Evelyn Lanarang, Beltran said.

Beltran said abused OFWs who had been repatriated to the country blamed these officials for ordering other OFWs to return to their abusive employers in Jordan.

He said the officials violated the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipino Act of 1995 which mandates that the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration personnel on the ground, in coordination with the DFA, should repatriate workers who are "in need and without means." *Philip C. Tubeza*

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TRAFALGAR Ice/Anna 2F Trafalgar Plaza H.V. dela Costa 814-0138
SKIN CENTER: ALABANG [illegible] BINONDO [illegible] CALOOCAN [illegible] GREENHILLS [illegible] MALATE [illegible] MEGAMALL [illegible] PASAY RD. [illegible] PASIG [illegible]

GMA rushes VAT bill approval

From page A1

doubt whether they could pass the VAT measure during the three-day special session.

Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan said it would be unwise of Malacañang to press for the passage of the VAT amendments at the expense of exhaustive debates.

At least three senators—Joker Arroyo, Manuel Villar and Aquilino Pimentel Jr.—said the VAT bill should be tackled during the resumption of the regular session on April 11.

But Senate President Franklin Drilon said only five senators would be abroad, leaving 18 available to attend the special session. He said the presence of 10 senators would constitute a quorum.

The Senate can muster a quorum as it is the constitutional duty of senators to attend a special session called by the President of the Republic, according to Pangilinan.

"However, even if we pass the VAT during the three-day special session as expressed by Malacañang, it would be unwise to do so," Pangilinan said in a statement.

Haste makes waste

Pangilinan said investor confidence would be unshaken whether Congress passed the measure in three days or in three weeks.

"Some of the senators need more time to debate the matter. They see no problem in passing the VAT mid-April," he said. "Haste makes waste."

Sen. Ralph Recto, chair of the Senate ways and means committee, sponsor of the bill, earlier doubted the chamber could pass the measure even with a special session.

Asked about the chances of the bill being approved, Drilon said: "It is possible that we will not approve it. It is possible that it will be approved."

Drilon said five senators will be out of the country during the special session—Pia Cayetano, Lito Lapid, Loi Estrada, Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr. and Manuel Villar. Villar is travelling to Japan and Australia and the four others will be in the United States.

Drilon said Sen. Richard Gordon was abroad but would come back for the special session.

Senate sources said only eight senators had confirmed their attendance in the special session—Drilon, Pangilinan, Recto, Mar Roxas, Gordon, Juan Flavier, Rodolfo Biazon and Edgardo Angara.

Sen. Joker Arroyo said on Saturday he would attend the session.

It remained to be seen whether Pimentel, Panfilo Lacson, Miriam Defensor-Santiago, Juan Ponce Enrile, Alfredo Lim, Jamby Madrigal and Serge Osmeña would attend the session.

Asked if the President would be embarrassed if the special session ended up with sparse attendance, Bunye said: "I don't think that will happen. We see no problem in generating the necessary attendance."

"We're always hopeful that the Senate leadership will act accordingly in the best interest of the country," said Bunye, who rejected the notion that the VAT bill was doomed to go the way of Filipino boxing sensation Manny Pacquiao who lost his boxing match.

Not a total setback

In the House of Representatives, Assistant Majority Leader Antonio Cerilles said Drilon should resign if the Senate fails to "finish its job" during the special session.

Cerilles and House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles said in a statement that the senators, if they wanted to, could "just approve" the House version of the VAT bill, "like what they did with the 2005 national budget."

"If the Senate leadership cannot lead the majority into supporting an important revenue measure of the President, then (Drilon) can either join the opposition or resign from his post," Cerilles said.

Although a disappointment, the delay in approving the VAT was not a total setback, Salceda said.

"Such delay may prove beneficial eventually as it allows the softening stand of the Senate to a 12-percent VAT to flourish. It would prevent a protracted impasse at the bicameral conference and it would minimize the potential resort to a Supreme Court petition for a temporary restraining order,'" said Salceda, an economic adviser of the President.

"One step back, two steps forward. Markets will gyrate in disappointment, but the administration will not be distracted from the basic task of delivering P60 billion," Salceda said. "We expect Congress to deliver a credible VAT within April." *With a report from Philip C. Tubeza*

Militants slam TV ad spots on VAT hike

By Norman Bordadora

ASIDE from squirming over Manny Pacquiao's bleeding eye, leaders of the militant Bagong Alyansang Makabayan were writhing with the airing of every ad spot declaring the merits of a higher value-added tax over sequestered station RPN-9, which showed the Filipino boxer's fight with Mexican Erik Morales.

"I don't know which was worse, Pacquiao losing to Morales or the government trying to swindle the people through the use of packaged lies and deceit," Bayan secretary general Renato M. Reyes Jr. said.

"The lies peddled during the commercial breaks were nauseating, to say the least," Reyes said.

The advertisements, which tried to show the virtues of the proposal to raise the VAT rate from 10 percent to 12 percent, were aired on RPN-9 during commercial breaks in the coverage of the widely watched fight between the Filipino hero and the Mexican slugger.

One advertisement cited population growth as one reason the public should support the adoption of an expanded VAT. Another ad said a higher VAT rate would only affect luxury items and not basic commodities.

"It's not true that the VAT would only affect luxury items since the current proposals also call for levying a VAT on electricity and petroleum products," Reyes said.

Bayan Muna Rep. Teddy Casiño said the ads, watched by rich and poor alike, were "designed to subliminally elicit acceptance" of the proposed VAT hike by trumpeting that prime goods would not be hit by a higher VAT rate.

"The ads even insinuate that those against the VAT are those who are unwilling to pay their taxes. The advertisements smack of cheap publicity," Casiño said in a statement.

Bayan also questioned the production and airing of the VAT hike commercials presumably at the expense of the government.

"It was not clear, however, if the commercials aired on TV were commissioned or paid for by the government since there were no tags at the end of every commercial. Still, [we] could only suspect that it was the government that paid for the TV ads," Reyes said.

He questioned the propriety of producing and airing the VAT hike ads when the government was already in bad fiscal shape.

Government mass media chief Cerge Remonde said the government did not spend a single centavo for the series of television ads.

"As Bayan has the right to attack government, the latter has also the right to use everything in its means to put its message across," said Remonde, a former chair of the Kapisanan ng Brodkaster sa Pilipinas. *With reports from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. in Manila and Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Hero's welcome awaits Pacquiao despite defeat

From page A1

spite losing to Mexican Erik Morales in Las Vegas, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said yesterday.

"Our admiration for Manny is undiminished. He showed the fighting spirit of the Filipino people," Bunye said at a press briefing.

"A weak-hearted boxer fighting with one eye would have given up easily, but not Manny, who fought to the end. He showed the true heart of a warrior."

Asked if Malacañang planned a hero's welcome for Pacquiao, Bunye said: "Definitely, definitely."

He said President Macapagal-Arroyo considered the boxer an authentic Filipino sports hero.

"The Palace will always be open to Pacquiao and we're prepared to [receive] him at his convenience. These details will be arranged," Bunye said, adding that a warm welcome for the pugilist was only fitting.

"You can't win all the time. All great boxers, with the exception of Rocky Marciano, tasted defeat at one time or another," said Bunye, citing heavyweight boxing legends Muhammad Ali and Joe Louis as among those who rose from defeat to reclaim their glory.

"We believe that Manny will bounce back from this defeat and he will go on to greater heights," Bunye said.

Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace Durano has not received word on when Pacquiao will come home but said his office was coordinating with the boxer's manager and other government agencies "to prepare a hero's welcome for him."

The Ninoy Aquino International Airport will be decorated for Pacquiao's arrival, with Durano leading government officials in greeting the fighter.

Durano said he would escort Pacquiao to Malacañang for the meeting with Ms Arroyo.

The tourism department is also working with the local government and with civic groups in General Santos City to "make his hometown return something he will never forget," Durano said.

The defeat to Morales may have cast a pall of gloom on the country but it also drew the attention of lawmakers to the plight of the country's professional boxers.

Caring for the boxers

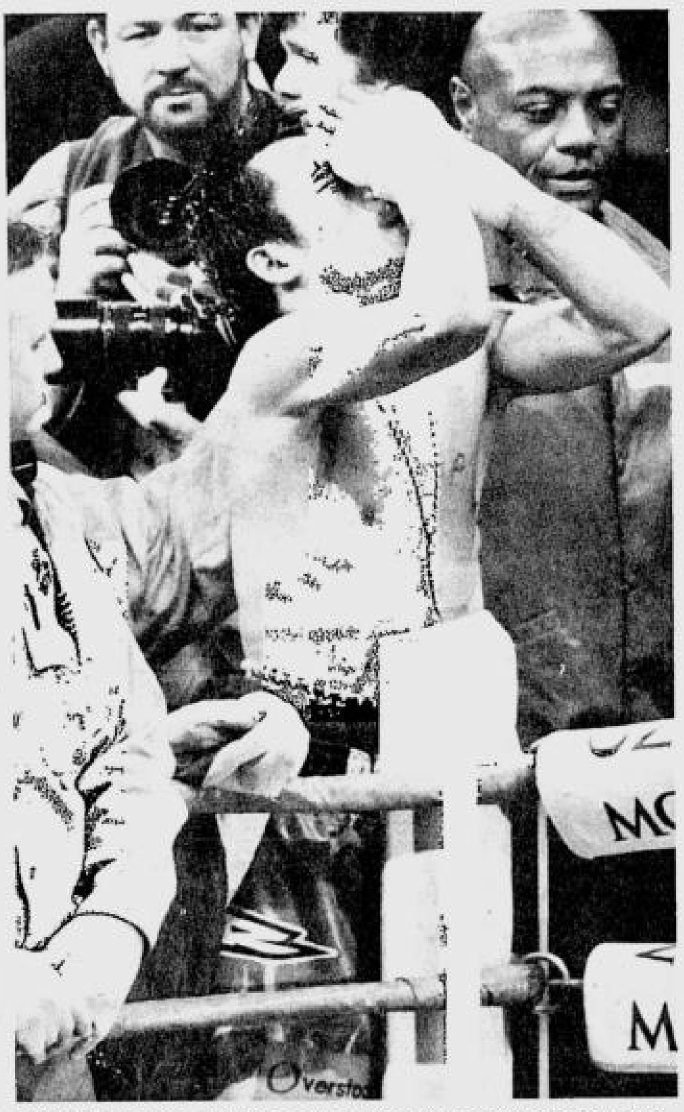
Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago filed a bill requiring the Games and Amusement Board to compel promoters to provide boxers with insurance coverage for any injuries sustained during matches.

"While most boxing organizations may have already incorporated all these health and safety requisites in their own charters, it is important that our government take primary responsibility in ensuring the safety of our boxers by enacting a law that will solely serve their interests," Santiago said in a statement.

"Many of our countrymen have made the nation proud by becoming world champions. It is high time we look after their welfare."

Blood sport

Santiago, whose husband Narciso was a boxer in college, said she watched Saturday's fight on television and was impressed by Pacquiao's gallantry.



MANNY Pacquiao prays in a corner of the ring after losing the super featherweight bout to Erik Morales of Mexico at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas. REUTERS

In Senate Bill No. 1501, Santiago said boxing, being a blood sport, should be subject to government regulation and safety standards.

Under Santiago's proposal, a professional boxing match would be staged only if a licensed practicing physician, whose services were paid for by the promoter, was present at ringside.

The promoter should also make sure an ambulance is on standby, she added.

Lure of money

The bill would also mandate promoters to subject boxers to a physical examination by a licensed practicing physician before a fight.

"I know there are boxers, especially those who are just starting out in their careers, who will participate in a match even if they're not in tip-top shape because they are thinking of the money to feed their families," Santiago said.

"This is very dangerous. A boxer endangers his health if he is not in perfect physical condition."

Any manager, promoter, matchmaker or licensee who violates the proposed law's provisions faces one-year imprisonment or a fine of up to P100,000, or both, she said.

No more Navarretes

Santiago also asked Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas to study the feasibility of a national pension system for professional boxers.

"We don't want the future Manny Pacquiaos of this country to end up, when they retire, like Rolando Navarrete, who is now living in poverty," she said.

Santiago was referring to the former World Boxing Council junior lightweight champion, who is now a fish vendor. *With reports from TJ Burgonio and Jerome Aning*

Library rescues works of women writers

From page A1

ter to a new generation of writers, especially the women, who were in search of role models.

Aliww came to be when Manlapaz complained to Reyes that she could not find "enough documents about Manalang Gloria, d_n it."

The scholar in her believed that "without documents, no history exists."

"If there are no records of what you've achieved, you don't exist," Manlapaz, who's on the board of directors of Aliww, said. "We must make an effort to collect while these writers are still alive or before the records get lost. If this was true of Angela Manalang Gloria, how much more for so many others or lesser known figures?"

It hit Manlapaz that there was a crying need "to salvage materials before they're lost to termites, floodwaters, fire—to name some obvious things."

So she conceptualized a place "where women writers can be invited, threatened, cajoled and flattered into donating papers for the use of scholars and readers."

Together with Reyes, Manlapaz broached the idea to Patricia Licuanan, then Ateneo academic vice president.

At the time, Manlapaz said, the university did not (and still does not) have a women's studies center.

"So an archive would be a unique contribution to that field," Manlapaz said. "We were not about to compete with the women's studies centers of other schools. We wanted to complement them in the true spirit of sisterhood."

She credited the Jesuits for "seeing the vision, sharing it and literally giving us a room of our own" on the third floor of the Rizal Library on the Ateneo campus at Loyola Heights, Quezon City.

Expansion

The room has since expanded to three, to include a reading room, a reception room and an archival section that houses on compact shelves the print memorabilia of (at last count) 165 Filipino women.

The archives are temperature- and humidity-controlled.

The archival staff treats the documents with preservatives to prevent disintegration. They are also stored in microfiche, digitized and photocopied.

The original copies may be examined upon request, but if the researcher wants to handle them, she gets only the photocopies.

Among the more notable women represented are Estrella Alfon, Encarnacion Alzona, Eugenia D. Apostol, Tita Lacambra-Ayala, Lualhati Bautista, Paz Marquez Benitez, Imelda Cajipe-Endaya, Gilda Cordero Fernando, Araceli Limcaco Dans, Dolores Stephens Feria, Ofelia Gelvezon-Tequi, Jessica Hagedorn, Ma. Rosa Luna Henson, Leticia Jimenez-Magsanoc, Lorna Kalaw Tirol, Bobbie Malay, Maningning Miclat, Sylvia Mayuga, Mita Pardo de Tavera, Pacita Pestaño Jacinto, Kerima Polotan, Ninotchka Rosca, Mary Ruff Tagle, Edith Tiempo, Trinidad Tarrosa Subido, Doris Trinidad, Linda Ty-Casper, Sylvia M. Ventura and Isabel Caro Wilson.

In fits and starts

Manlapaz said that with men, the trajectory of their lives is a series of achievements.

"Generals, taipans—they always keep documents of their works routinely. But women don't follow men's trajectory," she said, adding:

"We move in fits and starts. What we write—love poems, short stories, diaries, letters—are not often public record. Women tend to denigrate their own work. They're naturally self-effacing although they keep the report cards of their children and the citations of their husbands, but none of their own works. They dismiss their works as a pastime or hobby."

"Very often women artists don't take themselves seriously enough to document their works, so that's what Aliww does. Give us the documents, and we will keep and categorize them. Donate to us, and we provide a service by way of thanks, and this is to classify, catalogue, provide photocopies of works they've forgotten," she said.

'I'm dying'

Manlapaz cited the case of the late fictionist Lina Espina Moore. They met at a few PEN meetings, and Manlapaz told her about Aliww.

One day Manlapaz got a call, and on the other line, Moore said: "Edna, I'm dying. If you want any of my works, you have to get them now. I'm leaving for Cebu tomorrow."

Hastily, Manlapaz grabbed a car that brought her to Moore's Alabang house, where she saw about four boxes on the floor.

Moore had a maid remove things from the walls and shelves and told Manlapaz: "Take them."

A year and half later, or a few months before Moore died, Manlapaz was able to complete and release a biography titled "Austregelina: A story of Lina Espina Moore's Life and Selected Works."

Manlapaz said she was able to do it "because the materials were there."

When she tries to persuade women writers and artists to donate their papers, Manlapaz tells them: "Imagine, 100 years from now, someone would like to write your biography. What materials—letters, journals, photographs, notes—would a biographer find useful to be able to write a comprehensive and accurate biography?"

Social capital

Aliww's work, however, cannot be sustained without the help of sponsors and friends.

Now on its 10th year, it formed the Friends of Aliww, who were earlier told: "We are not after your money but your social capital" (meaning connections and network).

In 2000, Aliww opened itself to include women in the visual arts through a generous grant from the Helenica Foundation.

When the philanthropist behind the foundation heard Manlapaz's usual spiel on Aliww's mission and vision, he said: "P50,000 is not enough. I'll give you P500,000."

And he promptly sent his check, which became part of Aliww's endowment that has allowed it to honor in the past five years outstanding women artists Nena Saguil, Julie Lluch, Araceli Dans, Anna Fer and Pacita Abad.

The same donor gave another P1 million for Aliww to continue its work.

The executor of Saguil's will announced that the painter's papers would be turned over to Aliww. Art critic Eric Torres, who is writing her biography, discovered among the papers the only short story Saguil wrote.

As Manlapaz described it, "It's a love story in which the heroine, Saguil's alter ego, renounces love for her art."

Dark glasses

Aliww made one exception with regard to accepting donated items in the case of vernacular writer Rosario de Guzman Lingat, a prolific short story writer and novelist, who was deemed Liwayway magazine's "star writer."

She was such a breathtaking beauty in her time, her jealous husband forced her to wear dark glasses wherever she went so that no man could look into her eyes.

Lingat's children donated the glasses to Aliww, and Manlapaz accepted them because to her, they were symbolic of "how the patriarchy not only silences but also blinds women."

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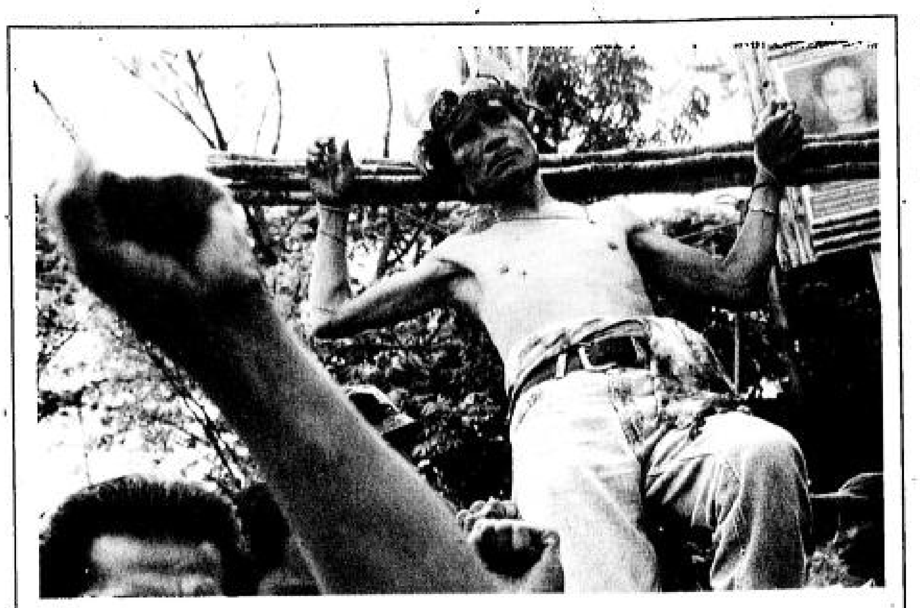

BITTER CROSS TO BEAR
A farmer is tied to a cross of sugarcane stalks in a protest staged by Hacienda Luisita farmers at the Commission on Human Rights in Quezon City yesterday. The farmers were protesting the breakdown in CBA talks with the sugar plantation's owners and the continuing violence being committed against them. MITCH MAURICIO

DSWD helps Bohol folk cope

By Cynthia D. Balana

THE SCHOOLMATES as well as the parents of the 27 children who died after eating poisoned cassava in Mabini, Bohol, two weeks ago are undergoing stress debriefing to help them cope with the traumatic experience.

Social Welfare Secretary Dinky Soliman told a press conference that social workers had been conducting two debriefings a day after the students and parents were diagnosed to be suffering from trauma.

"Our stress debriefers are conducting sessions in two batches—for mothers and students. It was a very, very traumatic experience for them. The students are listless and stunned [after] seeing their schoolmates dying," Soliman said.

She said it would take some time before the children's behavior would return to normal.

At least 27 children died and 103 others, mostly aged seven to 13, were hospitalized after eating caramelized cassava that had been mixed with pesticide.

At first, the poisoning was blamed on the cyanide content naturally found in the starchy delicacy but this was ruled out following autopsies conducted by the National Bureau of Investigation on the bodies of some victims.

Two street vendors were identified as having sold the cassava to the children. One is in the hospital after she ate some of her own snacks while the other is under NBI custody to protect her from the ire of the children's parents.

Soliman said the social workers had to wait until the survivors of those who died had settled down before beginning the debriefings. For the students, the Department of Social Welfare and Development has scheduled a "whole summer" of coping sessions through play therapy.

Sen. Manuel Villar, meanwhile, said authorities should make a public statement about whether or not cassava is safe to eat.

Villar, vice chair of the Senate agriculture and food committee, said the public deserved to know the real score after the poisoning incident in Bohol.

"I think the health and food authorities should settle the score regarding the edibility of cassava. We should once and for all quell the speculations regarding this staple food of Filipinos," Villar said in a statement.

Villar said that so far, only the NBI had "absolved cassava as the culprit" in the death of the schoolchildren who ate cassava for recess.

The NBI said the children died after ingesting an organo-phosphate insecticide called coumaphos that had been mixed into the cassava cooked by a vendor. The NBI found a can of the pesticide in the vendor's kitchen and traces of it in the frying pan she had used. *With Juliet Labog-Javellana*

Mining insurance sought

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE DEPARTMENT of Environment and Natural Resources wants foreign mining firms to set aside money for an insurance liability fund that would pay for damages that could result from their operations in the country.

Environment Secretary Michael Defensor said the insurance liability fund would be like a remediation fund, except that it would compel mining companies to pay for the insurance within the first seven years of operations.

"This way the insurance goes to the government representing the beneficiaries. When there are environmental problems, the money can be used for rehabilitation during the company's operations," Defensor said in a phone interview yesterday.

The remediation fund receives money from mining companies only on their last year of operations, with many firms using bankruptcy or zero profit as an excuse not to pay for such funds.

Defensor acknowledged that there was no provision in the Mining Act of 1995 creating an insurance liability fund.

He said the DENR was studying the formula of Chile, which bases its insurance on the life of the mining explorations and operations and the company's projected profit.

Environmental lawyers, meanwhile, are drafting a bill which they are pushing as an alternative to the Mining Act. The bill, which has more emphasis on social acceptability, is expected to be filed in Congress by June.

The Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center (LRC), which questioned the constitutionality of certain provisions in the Mining Act of 1995 before the Supreme Court, is identifying allies in Congress who would push for the repeal of the act and support the alternative bill.

Melizel Asuncion, LRC coordinator for Luzon, said the LRC had already conducted consultations in communities affected by mining operations.

The LRC has been to Davao Oriental, Zamboanga and South Cotabato for the consultations. It would also hold dialogues in Palawan, Nueva Vizcaya, Mindoro and Marinduque.

"The Mining Act of 1995 lacks provisions that pinpoint the responsibility for any damage done during mining operations," Asuncion said.

Defensor said the proposed alternative Mining Act could create a mechanism that would make foreign experts brought in by foreign mining companies accountable for any damage caused by mining operations.

"Besides the environmental clearance certificate, we should also hold their experts accountable.' They should not just cite the government's issuance of an ECC (environment compliance certificate) as an excuse for failures," Defensor said in a phone interview.

Within the year, the DENR will come up with an administrative order creating the insurance fund and a mechanism that will make foreign mining companies accountable, according to Defensor.

Government officials and businessmen have been on various trade shows abroad, promoting the Philippines as a country rich in mineral deposits valued at P47 trillion.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, March 22, 2005
Tuesday of Holy Week

1st Reading: **Is 49:1-6**
Gospel: **John 13:21-33,36-38**

Reclining at table with his disciples, Jesus was distressed in spirit and said plainly, "Truly, one of you will betray me." The disciples then looked at one another, wondering who he meant. One of the disciples, the one Jesus loved, was reclining near Jesus; so Simon Peter signaled him to ask Jesus whom he meant.

And the disciple who was reclining near Jesus asked him, "Lord, who is it?" Jesus answered, "I shall dip a piece of bread in the dish, and he to whom I give it, is the one."

So Jesus dipped the bread and gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. And as Judas took the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus then said to him, "What you are going to do, do quickly."

None of the others reclining at table understood why Jesus said this to Judas. As he had the common purse, they may have thought that Jesus was telling him, "Buy what we need for the feast," or, "Give something to the poor." Judas left as soon as he had eaten the bread. It was night.

When Judas had gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in him. God will glorify him, and he will glorify him very soon.

My children, I am with you for only a little while; you will look for me, but, as I already told the Jews, so now I tell you: where I am going you cannot come.

Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered, "Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but afterwards you will." Peter said, "Lord, why can't I follow you now? I am ready to give my life for you." Jesus answered, "To give your life for me! Truly, I tell you, the cock will not crow before you have denied me three times."

Commentary

The last meal with those he loves and calls friends and the awful announcement of betrayal. The one whom Jesus loves draws near to find out and is told, the one who shares the bread dipped in the dish is the one. This was usually an act of intimacy, of closeness among friends and Jesus uses it to speak one more time to Judas, inviting him in but Judas resists. Judas shares bread with Jesus and leaves. It grows close: Jesus announces that the Son of Man will be glorified and God will be glorified in him, and very soon. Such paradox: betrayal, glorification: rejection and total acceptance. And it's not just Judas—Peter too, staunchly claims to belong to Jesus and will die for him-yet he too is warned that soon he will betray him as well. We are warned ahead of time—will we betray our Lord, our Teacher and our God? There are many ways to do it: like Judas for money, for another's agenda in collusion with government and other authorities; like Peter in cowardice and fear; like the rest of the disciples and friends of Jesus in despair and terror that his fate may be their own as well. Lord, help us to be faithful, to face the cross and to face our failures with one another and with you and your Word.

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

REMEDIAL LAW (CIVIL PROCEDURE)—Jurisdiction over ejectment case—The regular court does not lose its jurisdiction over an ejectment case by the simple expedient of a party raising as a defense therein the alleged existence of a tenancy relationship between the parties. But it is the duty of the court to receive evidence to determine the allegations of tenancy. If, after hearing, tenancy had, in fact, been shown to be the real issue, the court should dismiss the case for lack of jurisdiction. The nature of an action and the jurisdiction of a tribunal are determined by the material allegations of the complaint and the law at the time the action was commenced. Jurisdiction of the tribunal over the subject matter or nature of an action is conferred only by law and not by the consent or waiver upon a court which, otherwise, would have no jurisdiction over the subject matter or nature of an action. Lack of jurisdiction of the court over an action or the subject matter of an action cannot be cured by the silence, acquiescence, or even by express consent of the parties. If the court has no jurisdiction over the nature of an action, it may dismiss the same ex mero motu or motu proprio. A decision of the court without jurisdiction is null and void; hence, it could never logically become final and executory. Such a judgment may be attacked directly or collaterally. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Callejo, Sr., Second Division, Laresma vs Abellana, G. R. No. 140973, November 11, 2004]

BY R. B. VERA

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Annan offers sweeping UN reforms, changes to int'l security system

UNITED NATIONS—UN Secretary General Kofi Annan on Sunday unveiled his blueprint for sweeping changes to the United Nations and the international system of security in place since World War II.

Driven in part by the bitter divisions over the US-led war in Iraq, which he said had brought the world to a crossroads, Annan proposed a vast overhaul that he wants national leaders to agree on this year.

Annan's report calls to widen the membership of the Security Council, the UN's top organ for international security, and asks it to fix guidelines that would determine when nations may legally go to war.

It asks nations to agree on a proposed definition of terrorism, which has been disputed for decades, establish a new human rights council and commit to ambitious goals on development, slashing poverty and building democracy.

"In an era of global interdependence, the glue of common interest, if properly perceived, should bind all states together in this cause, as should the impulses of our common humanity," Annan said in the report.

"After a period of difficulty in international affairs, in the face of both new threats and old ones in new guises, there is a yearning in many quarters for a new consensus on which to base collective action," the UN chief said.

"This is a deal that the secretary general is offering the world," Annan's chief-of-staff Mark Malloch Brown told reporters at UN headquarters in New York.

"It's not an a la carte package," Malloch Brown said. "We believe the whole thing has to hold together."

World leaders will hold a summit here in September, by which time Annan is hoping that most of the changes—including those contentious issues that have defied agreement for years—will be hammered out.

"If it doesn't come to a head by that (summit), the fear is that it just drifts into another period without a deadline," Malloch Brown said.

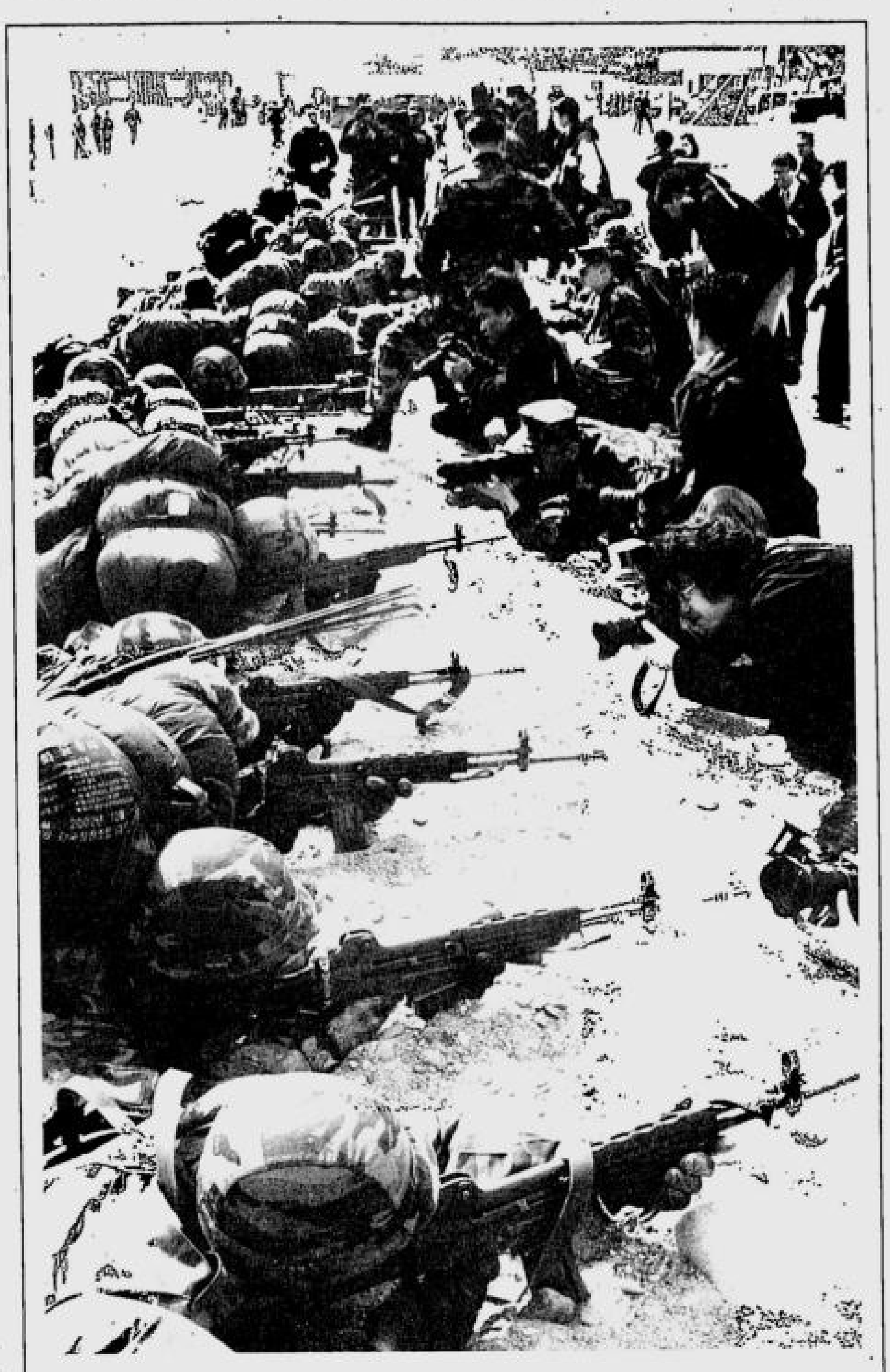
The major changes would have to be agreed by two-thirds of the UN's 191 member nations as well as by the five veto-wielding permanent Security Council members—Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States.

It remains unclear how much political will exists for substantive change but Malloch Brown insisted that momentum has been growing for sweeping reforms of the international system.

"I think there is a huge support for the idea that it's time for a bold and practical deal of this kind," Malloch Brown said.

Annan put forward two options for expanding Security Council membership from the current 15 to 24 nations—one of which would add new permanent members—and called for the creation of a peace-building commission.

He also issued a call for a new human rights council to be elected by member states as part of an overall bid to stress that development, health and rights are essential factors in the freedom and security of peoples and nations. *AFP*



EYEBALL TO EYEBALL

Photographers take pictures of South Korean Marines in the landing operation during a joint US-South Korea military exercise called "Foal Eagle" at Pohang beach, 400 km southeast of Seoul, March 21. Thousands of American and South Korean troops kicked off a joint military exercise last week after North Korea denounced the maneuvers as a rehearsal for a US-led preemptive attack on the isolated communist state. AP

DELOREAN, 80

John DeLorean answers reporters' questions in New York on Feb. 19, 1982. DeLorean, an innovative automaker who left a promising career in Detroit, Michigan, to develop the short-lived gull-winged sports cars featured as a souped-up time travel machine in the "Back to the Future" movies, has died. He was 80. AP

Qatar bomber worked at state energy company

DOHA—An Egyptian suicide bomber who attacked a theater in Qatar, killing a Briton, was employed at state-run Qatar Petroleum, company sources said on Monday.

A QP official told Reuters the company, which runs Qatar's rich oil and gas sector, was boosting security but there was no fear of sabotage after Saturday's car bomb blast which also injured 16 people.

QP sources said it was business as usual at oil and gas installations. Qatar pumps 800,000 barrels of oil a day and is among the world's top natural gas suppliers.

The Qatari Interior Ministry identified Egyptian Omar Ahmad Abdullah Ali as the suicide attacker who rammed an explosive-laden car into the theater frequented by Westerners near a British school in the capital Doha.

"QP will do all in its ability to ensure safety for all employees and family members," said a memo to staff which was read to Reuters.

It said QP was in contact with the authorities and the "situation is being closely monitored and is under control."

Ali had worked in the information technology department of the energy firm since 1990, his colleagues said.

"Nobody expected this from him. He was a decent man and just had a baby a month ago," one colleague told Reuters. "He was not a loner, but he was not the most sociable person." *Reuters*

Iraq, Jordan withdraw ambassadors

BAGHDAD—Iraq and Jordan engaged in a tit-for-tat withdrawal of ambassadors in a growing dispute over Shiite Muslim claims that Jordan is failing to block terrorists from entering Iraq, while US forces killed 24 insurgents in a clash south of Baghdad.

An American convoy was traveling through the Salman Pak area, 30 km southeast of Baghdad, when it was attacked, US officials said. Six soldiers and seven militants were wounded.

Sunday's diplomatic row erupted even as a Jordanian court sentenced in absentia Iraq's most feared terrorist—who was born in Jordan—to a 15-year prison term.

As news emerged of the largely symbolic sentencing of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, whose whereabouts are unknown, his al-Qaida in Iraq organization claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing that killed a top anticorruption official in the northern city of Mosul. Al-Zarqawi already has been sentenced to death twice by Jordan.

Sunday's events capped a week of rising tensions that included a protest in which Shiite demonstrators raised the Iraqi flag over the Jordanian Embassy in Baghdad and claims by the Shiite clergy-backed United Iraqi Alliance that Jordan was allowing terrorists to slip into Iraq. The Iraqi standard continued to flutter above the Jordanian Embassy on Monday.

"Iraqis are feeling very bitter over what happened. We decided, as the Iraqi government, to recall the Iraqi ambassador from Amman to discuss this," Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari said.

Jordan acted first, when Foreign Minister Hani al-Mulqi announced his charge d'affaires in Baghdad had been recalled to Amman.

"We are hoping that the Iraqi police will devise a plan to protect the embassy," al-Mulqi said. "Meanwhile, we have asked the charge d'affaires to come back because he was living in the embassy."

He added that other Jordanian diplomats will remain in Baghdad because they do not live in the embassy compound.

Both countries said the officials were being recalled for "consultations," leaving open the possibility for their return.

On Monday, the US military reported the death of one of its troops: A US Marine killed a day earlier during action in restive Anbar province, which contains the flash point cities of Fallujah and Ramadi.

The US military also said Monday that ten men captured by Iraqi soldiers last week had confessed to staging a March 9 Baghdad car-bomb attack near the Agricultural Ministry and a hotel favored by Westerners. *AP*

Malaysia must reduce dependence on foreign workers, king tells solons

KUALA LUMPUR—Malaysia must reduce its dependence on foreign workers, King Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin said Monday, amid an acute labor shortage caused by a crackdown that sent thousands of illegal workers fleeing the country.

"We are very concerned with the large number of foreign workers in this country," the country's ceremonial leader told the opening of a new session in parliament.

"Measures have to be taken to lessen our dependency on them in various sectors. We must train Malaysians to be self-reliant," the king said.

A crackdown on illegal immigrants which began this month has left industries with crippling labor shortages. About 200,000 workers are reportedly needed in the manufacturing sector, 150,000 in construction, 50,000 in plantations and 20,000 in the services sector.

The labor crunch follows the departure during a three-month amnesty programme which ended on March 1 of nearly 400,000 illegal immigrants, mostly from Indonesia but also from the Philippines, Burma (also known as Myanmar), Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka.

The country's dependence on foreign workers could be reduced by "enhancing automation in work processes and attracting locals to work in sectors which have been dominated all this while by foreign workers," the king said.

"Measures to overcome the problems of illegal immigrants will without doubt be more effective if enforcement is undertaken by the various agencies in a more coordinated manner," he added.

The king also pledged that Malaysia would continue an anticorruption drive launched by Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi when he took over from former premier Mahathir Mohamad in October 2003.

While Malaysia has "accomplished numerous successes in combating corruption, we must not be contented with what we have accomplished," he said.

"The punitive approach of enforcement and due punishment imposed on those found guilty of corruption continues to be implemented," he said. *AFP*

A MALAYSIAN soldier dressed in Malay traditional warrior costume waits before the opening of the second session of 11th Parliament in Kuala Lumpur March 21. AP

Sci-fi author Jules Verne feted 100 years after death

PARIS—In 1872, French author Jules Verne sent one of his greatest heroes, British adventurer Phileas Fogg, around the world in 80 days—an amazing feat given the modes of transportation available at the time.

On March 3, US aviator Steve Fossett completed the first solo flight around the world without refueling in three days. Last week, French sailor Bruno Peyron made the trip by boat in 50 days, winning the ... Jules Verne trophy.

One hundred years after the death of the French writer, known worldwide for his fantastic tales of undersea exploration and space travel, technology may have far eclipsed his own experiences, but not what he saw in his imagination.

"He was fascinated by progress and he depicted it in his works," says Didier Fremond, the curator of an exhibition celebrating Verne's life at the Maritime Museum in Paris, one of a series of events marking the centenary of his death.

From Paris to the western city of Nantes, where Verne was born on Feb. 8, 1828, to the northern town of Amiens, where he died on March 24, 1905, fans will be treated to exhibits, concerts, films and shows in his honor.

Verne ranks among the world's 10 most translated authors, along with William Shakespeare and Vladimir Lenin, according to Unesco, the UN's cultural body, and is revered by fans who have launched clubs around the world.

Many of Verne's works, like his famed "20,000 Leagues Under The Sea," revolve around water and voyages to far-off islands. The boat enthusiast, who owned three yachts in his lifetime, once said, "The need to sail consumed me."

"Half of his novels feature the sea in a significant way," explains Jean-Paul Dekiss, director of the International Jules Verne Center in Amiens.

"The sea is the principal metaphor for freedom and the possibility of judging groups of human beings in microcosms. The sea, for him, is infinity, infinite freedom."

Verne was first inspired to write his tales of adventure and exotic lands during his childhood in Nantes, when he spent countless hours watching boats go up and down the Loire.

In 1848, Verne left for Paris, where his father hoped he would study law. But he instead was quickly drawn into the literary world, going to the theater to applaud the works of Alexandre Dumas, Victor Hugo and Alfred de Musset.

Two years later, he made his writing debut and never looked back, describing his work as the "source of the only true happiness."

He wrote novels, plays, news articles, poems, essays and short stories. He met Dumas and explorer Jacques Arago, but it was his encounter with publisher Pierre-Jules Hetzel that transformed his life.

Verne, who had accepted a job at the Paris stock exchange, resigned in 1863 to focus on his "Extraordinary Journeys," a series that included the tales of Captain Nemo and Phileas Fogg, as well as "A Journey to the Center of the Earth" and "From the Earth to the Moon." *AFP*

Amid controversy, Bush signs bill to save Schiavo

WASHINGTON—President George W. Bush early Monday put his signature to controversial legislation designed to prolong the life of a severely brain-damaged Florida woman whose feeding tube has been removed by court order.

"Today, I signed into law a bill that will allow Federal courts to hear a claim by or on behalf of Terri Schiavo for violation of her rights relating to the withholding or withdrawal of food, fluids, or medical treatment necessary to sustain her life," Bush said in a statement.

"In cases like this one, where there are serious questions and substantial doubts, our society, our laws, and our courts should have a presumption in favor of life."

The US Congress gave its final approval to the bill shortly after midnight and it was rushed to the White House for Bush's signature.

The president, who had been at his Texas ranch and has further business in that part of the country later Monday, returned to Washington on Sunday specifically to sign the bill.

With few Democrats willing to mete out what could be interpreted as a death sentence, the House of Representatives voted 203-58 to hand over the fate of 41-year-old Schiavo, who has been in a persistent vegetative state for the past 15 years, to a federal court.

The Senate unanimously passed the same measure late Sunday.

With the bill now signed into law, Schiavo's feeding apparatus was likely to be re-attached, possibly later Monday, following a federal court hearing.

Although approval of the legislation has never been in doubt, the frenzy surrounding the case has brought to the fore old partisan divisions over issues like the sanctity of life, states rights, and delineation of constitutional powers.

"The legal issues, I grant everyone, are complicated, but the moral ones are not," thundered House Republican Majority Leader Tom DeLay. "Terri Schiavo is not brain-dead; she talks and she laughs and she expresses happiness and discomfort."

However, Democratic Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi argued Congress is overstepping constitutional bounds because the decision concerning Terri's future belonged to her husband, Michael Schiavo, "and to God."

She called the bill "constitutionally dubious" and accused congressional Republican leaders of "highly irregular and an improper use of legislative authority."

Terri Schiavo has been incapacitated since a 1990 cardiac arrest that damaged her brain.

Her feeding tube was removed Friday after a protracted legal battle that pits Michael Schiavo against her parents, Bob and Mary Schindler. *AFP*

POPE John Paul II waves an olive branch from the window of his studio overlooking St. Peter's Square at the Vatican on Palm Sunday, March 20. AP

Pope's inability to speak raises new doubts about his recovery

VATICAN CITY—Pope John Paul II's latest appearance stirred tens of thousands of pilgrims, but the frail Pontiff's inability to manage a simple greeting to his largest audience in months raised new questions about his recovery.

John Paul pressed a hand to his face and pounded a lectern in apparent frustration during his Palm Sunday appearance, which lasted less than a minute, at a window of his apartment overlooking St. Peter's Square.

It was the first time in 26 years as pope that he was unable to preside over the Mass ushering in Holy Week, the most important season on the Christian calendar and long one of his favorite appointments.

His face looking drawn and his lips curled in a pucker, the 84-year-old Pontiff did not offer even a simply worded greeting from his third-floor window adorned with a braided palm and the crimson papal banner.

Just a week earlier, before his release from a Rome hospital after Feb. 24 surgery to insert a breathing tube in his windpipe, John Paul had managed two sentences in a raspy voice. But on Sunday, with up to 50,000 expectant pilgrims packing the square, he said nothing, slapping the lectern with an open hand after waving an olive branch.

An aide then hastily closed the white curtains to his window. Vatican television did not zoom in close on the pope as it has during his other recent window appearances.

The adoring crowd applauded and grew teary-eyed at the sight of John Paul, clearly moved even though he didn't address the faithful or read out a few lines of his weekly blessing.

"You could feel his presence in the whole square, even if he didn't speak," said Pauline Everden, an Anglican tourist from England.

But the mute appearance threw fresh doubts on the pope's convalescence after being hospitalized for two breathing crises in less than a month. It was yet another signal that the papacy is entering a new phase, with the pope in the background delegating important events to top churchmen.

The use of television and video has become more important to John Paul's papacy as he is slowed by his ailments and the Vatican seeks to reassure the faithful with his image. Pilgrims at St. Peter's on Sunday strained to see him high in his window and followed his appearance on giant video screens erected in the square.

John Paul's vicar for Rome, Cardinal Camillo Ruini of Italy, presided over the Palm Sunday Mass, and Archbishop Leonardo Sandri of Argentina—the Pope's voice for the public since his latest hospitalizations—read out a message from the Pontiff to the crowd gathered on the sun-drenched square.

"With great joy I salute you," the pope's message said.

He singled out young people for a special greeting and mentioned World Youth Day in Cologne, Germany, in mid-August—his only scheduled foreign trip this year. But he did not express his desire to be there, something he has done on several recent occasions.

The Pope suffers from Parkinson's disease, which affects muscle control and makes it difficult for him to speak clearly. The Vatican has said the Pope's doctors will decide when the tube should be removed from his throat.

Sunday's Mass, which commemorated Jesus Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem, included a special prayer for the Pontiff, calling him "our beloved father" and asking that he continue in his "service up to the gift of life." *AP*

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Japan firms battle for hair loss solutions

TOKYO—A corporate battle to provide hair loss solutions in Japan heated up Monday with the nation's top cosmetics maker Shiseido launching a new tonic to rival the market leader.

Shiseido hopes Adenogen hair tonic for men, using hair growth stimulant adenosine, will knock Taisho Pharmaceutical and its RiUP product off the top shelf.

"With the launch of this product we aim to win the top market share," a Shiseido spokesperson said. "We want to increase our share to 20 percent."

Shiseido currently holds 10 percent of the Japanese market.

The company spokesperson said Adenogen is categorized as "a quasi drug" unlike top-selling RiUP, which is designated as a pharmaceutical product containing minoxidil developed by US drugmaker Upjohn, now Pfizer.

Taisho started selling RiUP in 1999, when it took the market leader position off Shiseido, and the firm now controls about 30 percent of the Japanese market for hair growth products, a Taisho spokesperson said.

Taisho values the entire market at 55 billion yen ($525 million) in terms of shipments by manufacturers last year.

Taisho's RiUP Lady, designed for women, will hit the shelves on April 1. *AFP*

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Date /Time	SUBJECT UNDER BM 850 /TITLE OF LECTURE/CREDIT UNITS	LECTURER
April 2, 2005		
8:00-10:00	ADR (*Fundamentals of Arbitration*) 2 cu	Dean Custodio O. Parlade
10:15-12:15	MCLE Prescribed (*Land Registration & Cadastral Proceedings*) 2 cu	Justice Oswaldo D. Agcaoili
1:00-3:00	Oral Advocacy (2cu)	Justice Hugo E. Gutierrez, Jr.
3:15-6:15	Updates in Criminal Law (3 cu)	Justice Rodolfo G. Palattao
April 9, 2005		
8:00-10:00	Updates in Remedial Law (2 cu)	Justice Hilarion L. Aquino
10:15-12:15	MCLE Prescribed Subject (*Environmental Law*) 2 cu	Justice Oswaldo D. Agcaoili
1:00-3:00	Legal Writing, (2 cu)	Justice Isagani A. Cruz
3:15-6:15	ADR (*Practice and Procedure in Arbitration*) 3 cu	Dean Custodio O. Parlade
April 16, 2005		
8:00-10:00	International Law (2 cu)	Prof. H. Harry L. Roque, Jr.
10:15-12:15	Updates in Constitutional Law (2 cu)	Atty. Jacinto D. Jimenez
1:00-3:00	Trial Skills (2 cu)	Justice Edilberto G. Sandoval
3:15-6:15	Legal Ethics (*Pitfalls in Disbarment & Suspension*) 3 cu	Usec Ernesto L. Pineda
April 30, 2005		
8:00-10:00	MCLE Prescribed (*International Legal Processes*) 2 cu	Prof. H. Harry L. Roque, Jr.
10:15-12:15	Pre-trial Skills (2 cu)	Justice Lucas P. Bersamin
1:00-3:00	Updates in Election Laws (2 cu)	Justice Regalado E. Maambong
3:15-6:15	Legal Ethics (*Responsibilities & Liabilities of a Lawyer*) 3 cu	Justice Nicolas P. Lapeña, Jr.

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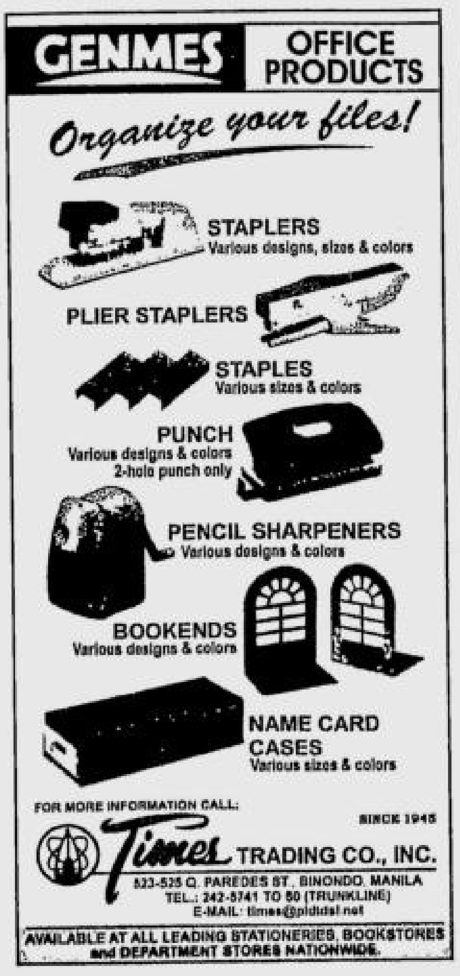

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US eyes 'other options' in dealing with N. Korea

BEIJING—The United States will consider other options for ending the dispute over North Korea's nuclear program if the North refuses to cooperate in a negotiated settlement, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said Monday.

At a news conference after meeting with President Hu Jintao and other Chinese leaders in Beijing, Rice said if North Korea refuses to cooperate, "then of course we'll have to look at other options."

But Rice made it clear that a military attack was not one of them.

"Whether the talks can restart depends on North Korea. Everyone is waiting and is ready to have a constructive discussion," Rice said of six-party talks to halt the North's nuclear ambitions that have been stalled since last June.

The North insists that it needs a nuclear program to generate energy and Rice said Washington was "prepared to think of their energy needs," but she reiterated that progress would only be made in a multinational setting.

"We hope North Korea understands that this (six-party talks) is the only way to address their needs," Rice told a news conference on the last day of her two-day visit to Pyongyang's closest supporter Beijing.

She said "everybody is aware there are other options in the international system."

The options could include seeking tough economic sanctions through the United Nations Security Council. North Korea has suggested the US might launch a military invasion, although Rice and other US officials have said repeatedly they do not intend to do that.

A state department official, speaking on condition of anonymity, was cautious when asked about alternatives should talks fail, and said he could not remember any discussions regarding a deadline.

"If they continue going down this road, not only would the United States, but with Japan, with South Korea, with China and with Russia, not to mention with the rest of world, they're going to have a problem," she said.

China was the final stop on a week-long tour of Asian capitals for Rice, and the most delicate for America's new chief diplomat. President Bush's second-term pledge to carry democratic ideals around the globe has met with suspicion in China, where government control remains a constant fact of daily life.

During her visit, Rice said that she discussed North Korea with Chinese leaders, and the "strong emphasis of the conversation" was on how each government—"but especially China"—could persuade the North to return to negotiations.

RICE

Rice said that Beijing—the closest ally of otherwise isolated North Korea—has a special role to play in persuading Pyongyang to come back to the bargaining table.

North Korea has said it already has at least one nuclear weapon and has refused to return to negotiations, citing Washington's "hostile" attitude.

Beijing has suggested that the United States hold one-on-one talks with North Korea, but Washington has ruled out that option and has instead urged a resumption of the talks that also include China, South Korea, Japan and Russia.

Rice said that the resumption of the talks depending on Pyongyang.

On another issue of concern to Washington is China's passage this month of a law declaring its intention to use military force against Taiwan, split from the mainland in 1949, should the island declare formal independence.

"Clearly the antisecession law did increase tensions," Rice said at the news conference after meeting with President Hu and other Chinese leaders.

Rice said she told Chinese leaders that "the most useful path would be to find ways to reduce tensions."

Under its complicated and purposely ambiguous policy on China and Taiwan, the United States is obligated to provide defensive weapons to Taiwan if it is attacked by the mainland.

Rice also suggested that European governments would be acting irresponsibly if they sold sophisticated weaponry to China that might one day be used against US forces in the Pacific. *AP, AFP*

Israel plans 3,500 new West Bank homes, paper says

JERUSALEM—Israel plans to build 3,500 new homes on occupied West Bank land for a residential complex connecting a major Jewish settlement to Jerusalem, the Israeli newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth reported on Monday.

It said Prime Minister Ariel Sharon ordered the construction of two neighborhoods between Maaleh Adumim and Arab East Jerusalem last week under proposals to cement Israel's hold on "Greater Jerusalem."

Israel captured Jerusalem in the 1967 Middle East war and calls the city its capital.

Palestinians want East Jerusalem as the capital of a future state and have demanded that Israel abide by its commitment under a US-backed peace "road map" to freeze all settlement construction.

US President George W. Bush has backed an Israeli plan to keep large West Bank settlement blocs round Jerusalem as part of any final peace accord.

No immediate comment was available from Israeli or Palestinian officials on the report. *AP*

Japan residents spend sleepless night after quake

GENKAIJIMA—Nearly 3,000 people took refuge at evacuation centers on Japan's southern main island of Kyushu on Monday, a day after a magnitude 7.0 earthquake struck, killing one and injuring about 500 people.

On Genkaijima, a small island off the northern coast of Kyushu and hardest hit by the quake, about 200 buildings were either destroyed or damaged, and roads were cracked and blocked in many areas by debris.

Most of the 700 residents of the hilly island fled to the main island and spent a sleepless night in gymnasiums used as evacuation centers.

"I could not sleep because I was so worried," said one Genkaijima resident, a man in his 40s.

"I wanted to stay on the island, but the aftershocks were getting so bad, I felt it was just too dangerous," he said, sitting up on futon mattress.

The focus of Sunday's quake was shallow and off the western coast of Fukuoka Prefecture, about 900 km southwest of Tokyo.

In Fukuoka city, the prefectural capital, buildings swayed, roads cracked and broken glass from shattered windows fell on the streets. A 75-year-old woman in the city died from injuries after a cement-block wall fell on her, police said.

In some areas, water and gas mains broke and bullet trains and other railway services were halted.

About 500 people were treated for injuries throughout Kyushu, with five remaining in serious condition, Kyodo news agency said.

The meteorological agency briefly issued tsunami warnings after the quake which hit at about 10:53 a.m. on Sunday, but the alerts were lifted about an hour later.

The earthquake recorded at magnitude 7.0 according to a technique similar to the Richter scale but adjusted for Japan's geological characteristics.

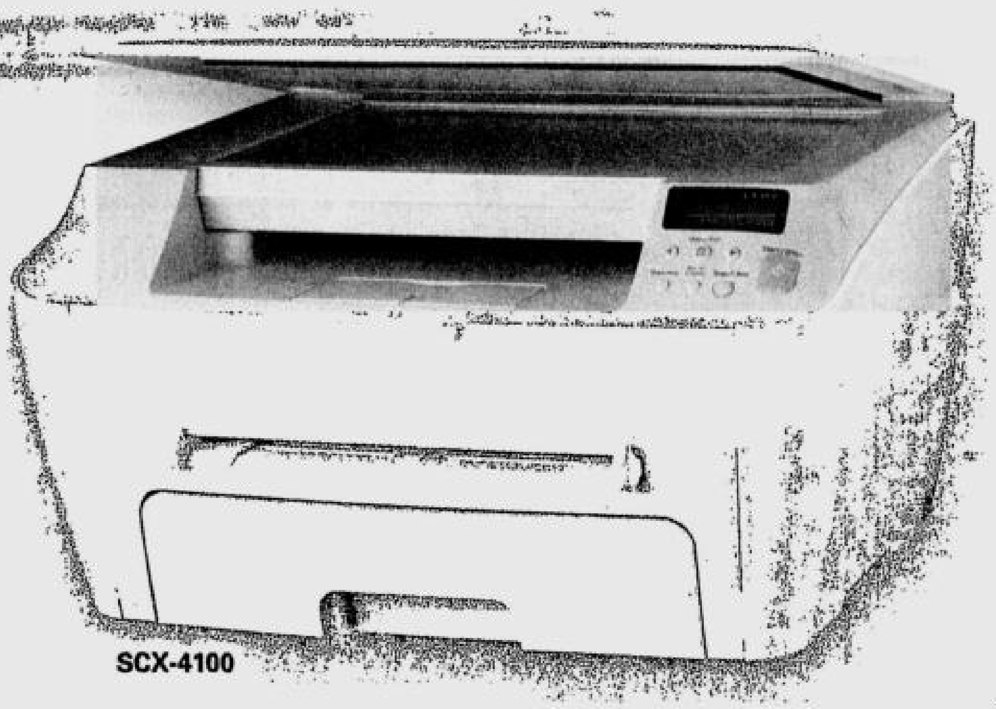
Authorities said aftershocks up to 6 in magnitude were possible. One of magnitude 4.2 hit at 6:17 a.m.

Seismologists said that an earthquake of magnitude 7 had hit the area about 300 years ago, but there were no records of other major quakes there since.

Earthquakes are common in Japan, one of the world's most seismically active areas where a tremor is recorded every five minutes. The country accounts for about 20 percent of the world's earthquakes of magnitude 6 or greater.

In October 2004, an earthquake with a magnitude of 6.8 struck the Niigata region in northern Japan, killing more than 40 people and injuring more than 3,000.

That was the deadliest quake since a magnitude 7.3 tremor hit the city of Kobe in 1995, killing more than 6,400. *Reuters*



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Demutualization in Retrospect

Sun Life Financial: Flourishing as a Public Company

IN MARCH 2000, Sun Life Financial, Inc. listed on the Philippine, Toronto, New York and London stock exchanges in connection with the demutualization of Sun Life Assurance Company of Canada.

Prior to demutualization, Sun Life Assurance was owned by participating policyholders who received annual dividends on their policies but who otherwise could not share in the growing value of the company. As a mutual company, it had limited ability to raise capital for growth and expansion.

Through demutualization, Sun Life Assurance converted into a publicly traded stock company owned by shareholders, with the ability to raise capital through stock offerings.

At the time of demutualization, policyholders eligible to receive demutualization benefits exceeded 190,000, making Sun Life Financial stock (ticker symbol: SLF) among the most widely held in the country. Demutualization provided a windfall for policyholders who kept their shares and for those who sold them.

A subsidiary is born

The Philippine branch was converted into a subsidiary, Sun Life of Canada (Philippines), Inc.

"The year 2000 was a banner year for Sun Life Financial in the Philippines," said Ms. Esther C. Tan, President & CEO of Sun Life of Canada (Philippines), Inc.

"Policyholders enjoyed the proceeds of their shares, many opting to use their funds to upgrade their policies. This drove income to unprecedented levels – P1 Billion in sales and P1 Billion in profits – and won for the Philippine subsidiary the first ever Chairman's Award, a recognition from the office of Mr. Donald Stewart, head of Sun Life Financial's global operations."

The optimism then provided a good launch pad for SLAMCI (Sun Life Asset Management Company, Inc.), the Philippine office's first subsidiary. SLAMCI exclusively manages and distributes the most diversified family of mutual funds in the country, the Sun Life Prosperity Funds.

About a year later, Sun Life Philippines opened a second subsidiary in SLFPI (Sun Life Financial Plans, Inc.), which offers pension and pre-need plans. SLFPI, even in its infancy, pioneered participating plans in the industry.

In the years that followed, Sun Life Philippines continued to enjoy external citations:

- Hewitt Associates named the company the 7th Best Employer in Asia-Philippines, the only life insurance company to make it to the top 10 in 2001.

- The Filipino-Chinese Federation of Business and Professional Women of the Philippines also cited Ms. Esther Tan as the country's Most Outstanding Businesswoman in 2002.

- The Canadian Chamber of Commerce conferred the company the Corporate Excellence Award and the Excellence Award for Corporate Social Responsibility in 2004.

Financial service at its finest

Sun Life Philippines' efforts to delight the customer, develop innovative and equally responsive products, and broaden the reach of financial freedom remains unrelenting.

"We have always envisioned Sun Life Philippines to become more diversified not only to complete the array of financial services we offer, but more importantly, to meet the growing needs and demands of our customers," Ms. Tan said.

To provide a hedge against foreign exchange rate fluctuations, the company offered US dollar-denominated plans such as the SunSure Pay Dollar 5 & 10, the Sun Forex Plus, as well as a variable universal life product like Sun FlexiDollar.

New additions to the roster of Prosperity Funds — the Dollar Advantage, Money Market, Dollar Abundance and Government Securities (GS) funds — were also introduced to empower investors with broader investment alternatives. As for pre-need and pension products, their improvement and enhancement are a continuing effort.

Customer service enhancements – the SunLink Mobile System (SMS Service); SunLink Call Center, Internet Applications, and the bank and mall facilities – were made with the end of facilitating business transactions and providing support when, where and how the customer wants it.

Finally, alternative distribution channels and affinities are being pursued to bring Sun Life Philippines' products closer to a wider customer base at the quickest possible time.

Financial muscle

Financial performance covering the five-year period from year 2000 to year 2004 spells a positive outlook for Sun Life Philippines.

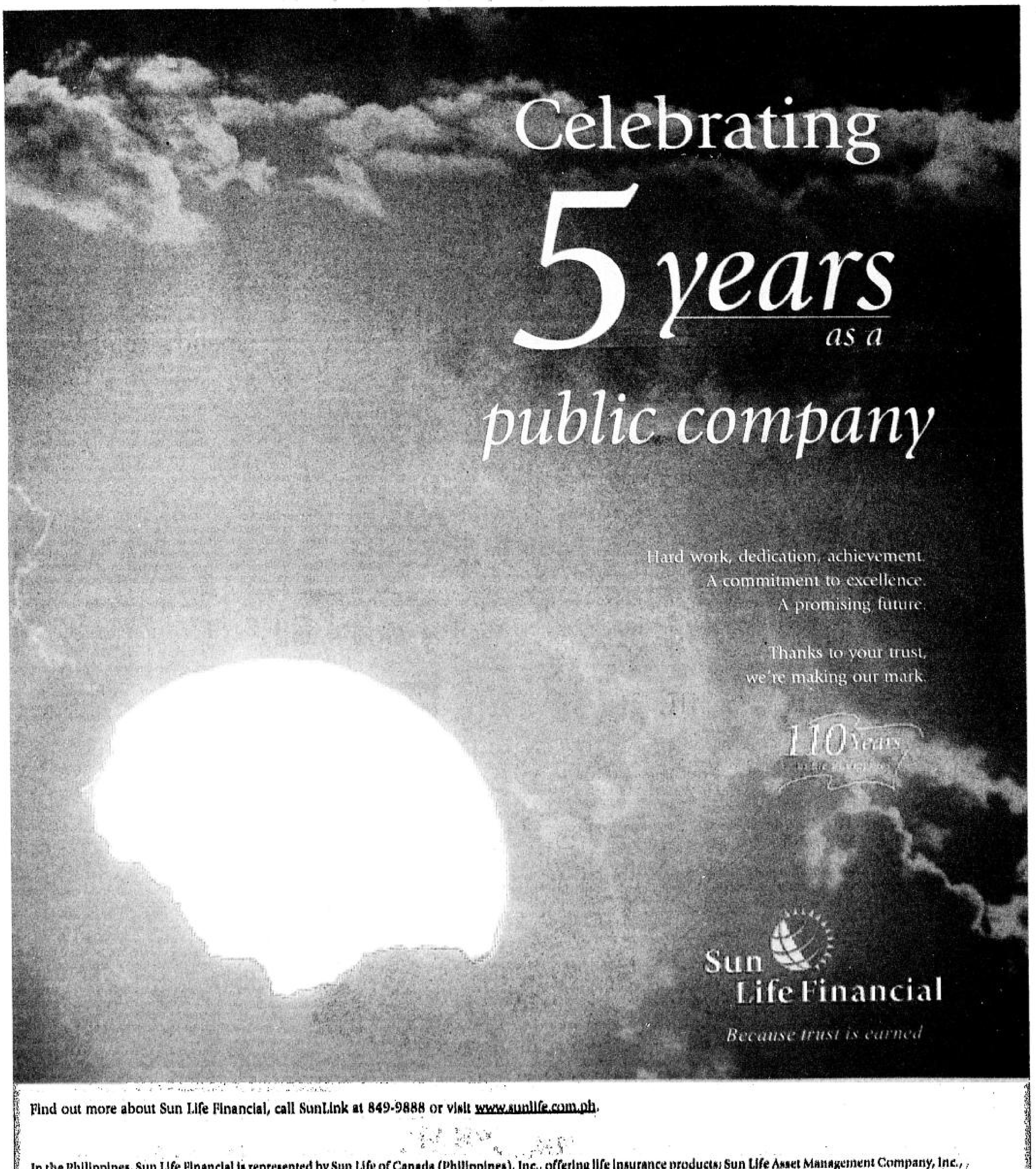
Compounded average growth rates (CAGR) are:

- 12.3% in Premium Income
- 19.2% in Investment Income
- 15.1 % in Total Revenues
- 28.0% in Net Income
- 17.3% in Total Assets

In 2004, the company exceeded all key measures compared to the previous year with P7.6 Billion in Total Premiums; P5.8 Billion in Investment Income; P15.0 Billion in Total Revenue; and P2.3 Billion in Net Income *(All figures based on Philippine Generally Accepted Accounting Principles).*

Sun Life Philippines is a member of the Sun Life Financial group of companies. It is a full financial services company and one of the country's largest life insurers with over 400,000 policies in force.

Sun Life Philippines, whose roots in the country go back 110 years, continues to build on its reputation of resilience, financial stability, trustworthiness, and service excellence. After all, trust is earned.



Find out more about Sun Life Financial, call SunLink at 849-9888 or visit www.sunlife.com.ph.

In the Philippines, Sun Life Financial is represented by Sun Life of Canada (Philippines), Inc., offering life insurance products; Sun Life Asset Management Company, Inc., manager and distributor of the Sun Life Prosperity Funds; and Sun Life Financial Plans, Inc., offering pension and eduaction plans.

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EDITORIALS

Fighting spirit

MANNY Pacquiao fought a good fight, but he lost to a taller, smarter, more experienced boxer. Still he deserves our applause for his courage and fighting heart. He gave the fight his all, but it was not enough to defeat Erik Morales, much less to knock him down.

People will be talking about the slambang bout in the next few days. What if Pacquiao had not suffered a cut on his right eyebrow, the result of a head-butt (which was not seen by the referee)? Would he have seen better and landed more telling blows on Morales? What if he had been allowed to use his favorite brand of boxing gloves? Would his blows have been more effective?

Boxing aficionados will be discussing many "what ifs," but the fact is that Pacquiao himself conceded defeat to Morales. He lost to a better boxer.

Still, he need not hang his head in shame. He did his best, and he even tried to stage a rally in the last round, but he could not turn the tide.

Pacquiao is still young, he has a great fighting spirit and he can still bounce back. He has many fights ahead of him. He has already proved his drawing power at the tills, and should be getting other fight offers in the near future.

President Macapagal-Arroyo rightly said that Pacquiao set an example of the "toughness we need to surmount our trials and in fighting our way to become a strong Philippines." Yes, it's time we discarded our negative, defeatist attitude and became tough, courageous and more determined to attain our goals, despite all the adversity and the bad breaks that we have been encountering.

If all of us can have the grit, determination and fighting heart of Manny Pacquiao, we can overcome all our personal and national trials, achieve more, and ultimately become a more progressive nation.

Big winners

ERIK Morales was of course the big winner of the fight. Before the fight, and during the bout itself, he simply played it cool. He was not affected by all the hype about Manny Pacquiao. He just played it smart, put into play all the ring experience in the 49 bouts that he had previously fought.

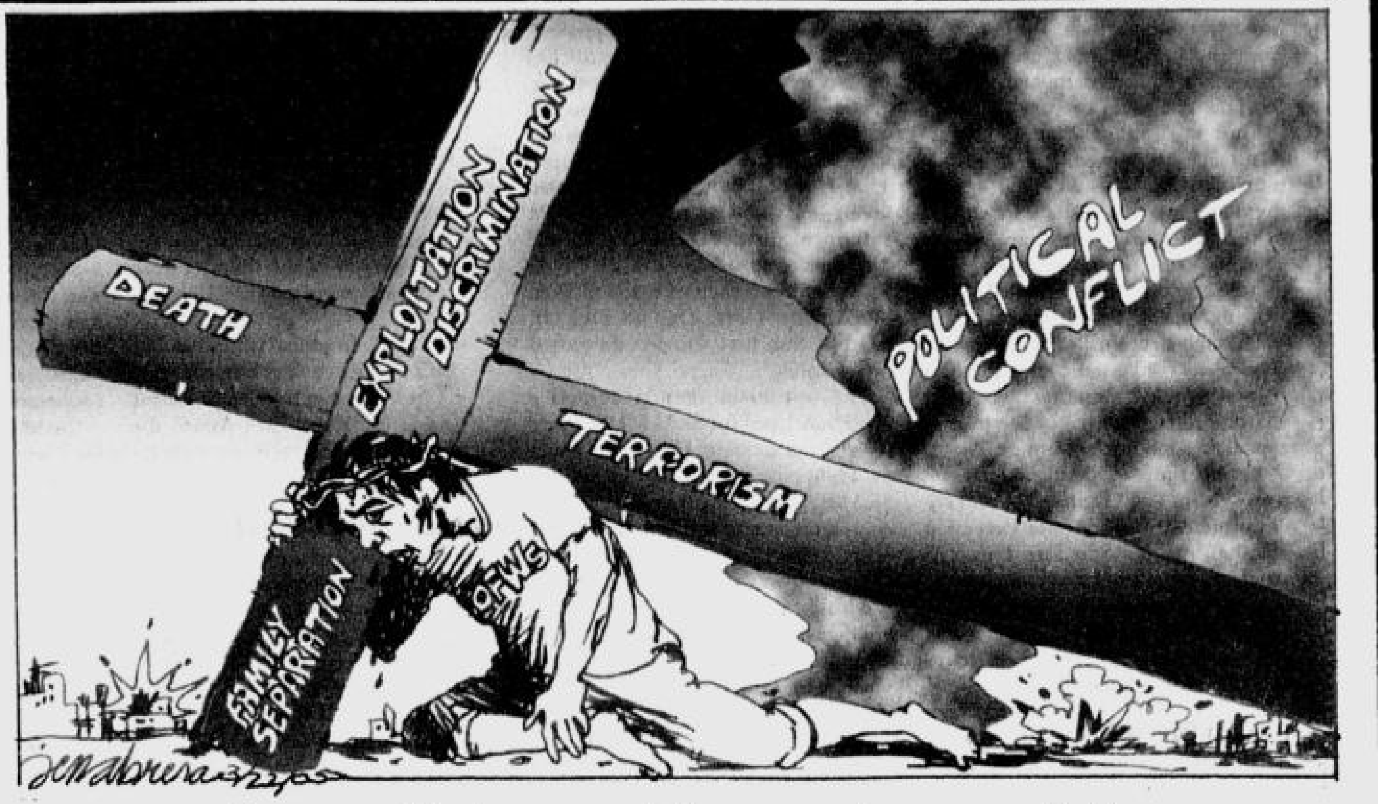
The Mexicans were also big winners. They must have believed all the hype about Pacquiao, because if reports are correct, they did not bet heavily on their man. But Pacquiao's defeat revived Mexican pride, which suffered a big blow when Pacquiao beat Marco Antonio Barrera in 2003. Now the Mexicans can even afford to taunt Pacquiao, saying that he is "all sound, no fury," and that he is not that smart and strong.

The promoters also won big and must have made a killing in the sale of tickets and TV rights. But they had a good gate because Pacquiao is "hot property," one of the best boxers in his class, pound for pound. So they have Pacquiao to thank for the millions that they made.

The audience, both at the MGM Grand Hotel Arena and those who watched the fight on TV, also won because Pacquiao and Morales fought a thrilling, closely contested fight. They got their money's worth.

Big winners in the Philippines were Solar Entertainment and RPN 9. The scores of commercials inserted between rounds—even in the rounds of the undercard fights—must have made millions for Solar and RPN 9. We wonder, however, if the two organizations did not violate an understanding in the TV industry to limit the number of commercials in a program or the coverage of an event. Is there really no way they can enforce the limit on the ad load of televised coverage of boxing bouts and other sporting events?

Can't we give the TV audience a better deal? Last Sunday, the radio had the results earlier than TV. It was not the first time that happened. Television stations delay the airing of the fight to be able to pack in all the commercials that the program can bear. But the main purpose of TV coverage of sporting events is to give the result—as soon as possible—and not only to provide entertainment. And so, in a sense, last Sunday the TV audience was a loser. But of course, the audience stays tuned to the carrying station because nothing beats the visuals of television.



Is media's reaching out enough?

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

THE BOUNDARIES between press freedom and abuse are "blurred," Amando Doronila wrote in the INQUIRER last March 18. Thus, resolution of a libel case, lodged by former Foreign Secretary Roberto Romulo against Philippine Star publisher Max Soliven is "tremendously important."

Doronila focused on a piggy-backed issue: Would the refusal by a paper to voluntarily accord the right of reply lead to court enforcement? That would stand on its head current relationships between the press and government officials. But former Solicitor General Frank Chavez muddied that issue with a from-the-left-field graft charge against Romulo.

The right of reply is one of many issues, a Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility consultation noted. Gut-wrenching changes in technology, economics and social patterns are working their way through society. A population of 18 million in 1940 now exceeds 83 million.

Those changes alter media structures and the way it operates. Fax and satellites, for instance, have whittled away at face-to-face contact between editors and reporters.

Beats are frozen in pre-war patterns: police, city hall, courts, Senate, Malacañang, etc. But on the ground, the realities have shifted with migration waves, ecological quagmires, health problems, etc. They interlock, heedless of editorial desk turf-setting.

The press in itself is under-reported, the consultation noted. It's emerging as a beat in itself. And the press must explain how it works if today's "blurry boundaries" are to be understood.

"A labyrinth of technology madly races journalists into the future," Columbian editor and Nobel Laureate Gabriel Garcia Marquez notes. "(Technology) diminishes the importance of news content which is the ultimate journalistic standard… Never has this profession been more dangerous."

The press, however, is reaching out, not adequately enough for some. The INQUIRER's ombudsman, Raul Palabrica, for example, addresses complaints. But he also explains how the newsroom operates—or sometimes stumbles.

Similar community press initiatives are erratic but growing. Despite fierce competition, newspapers and broadcast stations in Cebu collaborate in a unique annual Press Freedom Week. They foster projects on press accountability.

A survey by mass communication schools found the press is appreciated when it acts as a watchdog. "An alert public will not tolerate lapdogs in our ranks," an editor noted.

A permanent photo exhibit is emerging at the new Marcelo Fernan-Cebu Press Center. Included are journalists like Sergio Osmeña Sr., Vicente Sotto, Mariano J. Cuenco, Maria Cabigon, among others. "This work in progress seeks to document media's history here," says Sun-Star editor Pachico Seares.

We're not just "tacking up faded photographs," the Cebu Daily News noted. "This is probing into the memory of a people bugged by historical Alzheimer's. The exercise provides insights into what shaped yesterday's front pages. That historical context can help those who will write tomorrow's headlines."

And the annual pooled editorials can be scathing about its self-assessment. "Our membership lists remain porous," noted The Freeman and others. "We've still to flush out the hao-shiaos who flash press cards or walk-in block time microphones… Some moonlight as consultants for officials they cover…

"Press credentials do not guarantee immunity from drug cartels to penetrate our ranks… Moral shabbiness exudes pus. Its stench offends. If we think otherwise, we should have our heads examined."

"Getting To Know Your Paper" is a Sun-Star feature. And "Direct Line" presents, in question-and-answer format, actual coverage to distill future guidelines.

The most recent interview swirled around how press challenges over eight years to Cebu's multi-billion-peso reclamation finally confirmed a debt trap. Here are "Direct Line" excerpts:

"The press is society's early warning system," the interviewed reporter says. This role is most critical when everybody is cheering. Euphoria swamped many over the reclamation's yen-loan.

"The press must break away from such choirs." It repeatedly warned about a debt trap, given looming devaluations. Today, City Hall grudgingly admits ladling out P1 million daily just for interest.

What sparked the early challenge? "Direct Line" asked. Mayor Tomas Osmeña's spin that taxpayers would not pay a single centavo was the answer. Even a cub reporter knows there's no such thing as a free lunch. Sweeping claims should trigger alarm bells.

The press' duty is to challenge claims, not to entertain. "Our task is to tell people things they can't ask for in a survey… We must go beyond the facts and spot the undercurrents of change. That's what can kill."

What about the loan blackout? "Direct Line" asked. Piece by piece, individual reporters stitched the data together despite official "omerta." These young reporters, mostly women, applied the old editorial "Sunshine Principle": "Focus the light of hard reporting—and watch the cockroaches scamper."

In goon-ruled Pagadian today, editors who publish critical reports court assassination, the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism notes. But in most other places, the press is free to probe. Nonetheless, some journalists don't, from sloth, intent or what. Freedom unused withers. And work deteriorates into caricature, as in Pagadian.

"The press is a frail vessel for the hopes it is meant to bear." Direct Line quotes Times editor Harry Evans. "The best it can do is never enough to illuminate the invisible environment—the complexity of forces and agencies that we cannot monitor for ourselves but affect our lives."

(E-mail: juan_mercado@pacific.net.ph)

God's will

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

BISHOP Oscar Cruz had some interesting things to say about the Department of Health's nationwide campaign for responsible parenthood a couple of months ago. "First," he said, "there was the 'Ligtas-Tigdas.' Now there is the 'Ligtas-Buntis 2005.' What is supposed to be sacred, such as human sexuality, has now become a dangerous liability. What is to be treated with dignity, such as human pregnancy, is now considered a dirty disease."

He went on: "When shall this country treat its citizens with respect? When will it learn to make its people its precious asset? When will it truly acknowledge that it is its population, such as the OFWs, that keep it somehow economically afloat?"

Comes now Bishop Jesus Dosado proposing something drastic, which is that the people pushing for or supporting government's "anti-life policies" be barred from taking Holy Communion, or themselves voluntarily refrain from doing so. They are not worthy to receive Christ, he says. Artificial birth control methods go against the will of God.

Well, Cruz has a right to be a little peeved that the DOH should put *buntis* on the same plane as *tigdas*. Which should be a lesson in taking semantics as seriously as health: Both are a matter of life and death. The day you suggest that pregnancy has the same characteristics as chicken pox is the day you invite the wrath of God, or his self-professed representatives on earth, down on your cause. I know that Gabriel Garcia Marquez once compared the symptoms of love to those of cholera (in "Love in the Time of Cholera"): stomach ache, dizziness, vomiting. But that is love, or at least the situation when one is waiting for word about whether one's love is requited or not. Not pregnancy.

A better word would have been "*iwas*," or avoid, rather than "*ligtas*," or cure, though even "*iwas*"—particularly with its association with "*iwas-pusoy*"—is bound to raise the hackles of those who think pregnancy is a consummation devoutly to be wished by every woman at every turn (of the screw). Those who think so being the bishops and priests, who, not quite incidentally, are all men. I wonder how women priests, or women bishops, would feel about this when, or if, the day comes, though to the current Church the concept of women priests probably comes more directly from the devil's mind than contraception. Fortunately for priests, who have been known to get some of their female parishioners pregnant, they personally do not have to bear the fruits of their labor for nine months, and face the diatribe of gossipy neighbors. Their objects of love, or lust, do. If they themselves did, they might develop a new appreciation for the words "*ligtas*" and "*iwas*." Or at least understand why, though truly pregnancy is not a malignancy, it is a consummation often devoutly to be avoided, or prevented.

Just as well, human sexuality may be sacred, but that doesn't mean the couple—and I can hear cries of "Heretic!" coming my way with the added qualification, man-and-woman or otherwise—should be gritting their teeth and whispering fervently, "In aid of heaven," while in the throes of its more intense expressions. Sacred is not opposed to pleasurable, or even fun. Unfortunately, most people do not have the iron discipline of some of us and can pull the thing out before it inundates the womb with its cascading glory. Concupiscent youth certainly does not, even the married variety, which, as another Church injunction assures, is the only context in which youth can release its concupiscence.

I cannot imagine a more anti-human, or indeed anti-life, view of sex than that it is burden to be endured to add to the number of carbon units in this planet. It is certainly anti-women, turning them into sows or cows to increase the stock, or as that local word so graphically puts it, "*palahian*." I've heard that word often used in conjunction with women with big hips. Big hips equals easy pregnancies, equals a bigger tribe, or race (*lahi*).

As to denying supporters of birth control Holy Communion, that is guaranteed only to plunge the number of communicants to record lows, if not the number of Catholics, or Christians, themselves in this country. If that proposal were applied to Spain, for example, home of the Opus Dei and the friars who brought us to this pass, there will be very few left to queue up to Holy Communion, or indeed to Mass itself. Certainly, there will be no public official to do so, government having legalized divorce in 1981 and abortion in 1985. Today, sex-change surgery in that country falls under the national health plan.

I agree with Cruz that government does not treat its citizens with respect, it does not see its people as its most precious resource, it does not appreciate what its OFWs in particular are doing to keep the country afloat. I disagree that that is shown by government's family planning program. In fact, it is shown by everything **except** government's family planning program. Government's lack of respect for its citizens and appreciation for the OFWs is shown first and foremost by the recklessness with which it advertises its leading role in the rape of Iraq. That war has been deemed by no less than the Pope itself as immoral and it has been shown by Robert Tarongoy as idiotic in the extreme, shoving as it does our OFWs in the path of harm. Why isn't the local Church fulminating against it?

In the end, it isn't just government that's showing contempt for the people. The Church is, too. You do not show respect for human beings by equating dignity with fertility, the divine spark with vulgar number. In any case, the growing litter the women of this country will be towing behind them isn't likely to land in Church, it is only likely to land in jail.

It's hard to see how that can be God's will.

Why not quality and quantity tourists?

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

FORMER Senate President Jovito Salonga called up yesterday to say he had avidly followed my series on the hapless victims of the back-to-back loan scam pulled by two unscrupulous former officers of the Philippine National Bank's Sucat branch from 2000 to 2003. Many of the 25 victims (reports say there are about 48 in all) are retired citizens who had hoped to live comfortably on their deposits in that bank for the rest of their lives, but a number are overseas Filipino workers who had put away some amount to see their children through college, so that they could have a better future. The victims have sought to recover their deposits from the PNB, but it appears to be stonewalling, even if it acknowledged wrong-doing by its unscrupulous officers by laying them off in mid-2003.

Salonga, co-founder and adviser of Bantay Katarungan, said that the militant NGO group, composed of prominent lawyers and students from the top law schools in Metro Manila, may take up the case for these victims of fraud. His group is scheduled to meet them soon in order to examine their documents. I am sure the latter's hopes will be boosted immensely, after their frustrating quest for justice. It comes as a fitting turn of events in this season of hope.

* * *

Tourism Secretary Ace Durano was quoted as saying that it's better to have "quality" tourists rather than "quantity" and that our neighbors in the region "envy" us because the Philippines has "quality" tourists, i.e., families who come to enjoy the country and its sights. I think Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia and the other countries around us would contest the tourism secretary's assertion. Over the years, I've visited key cities in Southeast Asia and it is evident to me that they attract whole families who spend a lot of money in those places. My husband and I were in Singapore for a very quick trip this weekend and the place is just crawling with tourists. August is the month of the Great Singapore Sale, but the city nevertheless tried to capture the tourists' dollars, euros, yen and rupiahs by putting up limited sales everywhere. What's good about it is that there seems to be something for any one regardless of age.

* * *

Interestingly, the Singaporeans don't seem to think they have enough tourists. They want more, and the prospective tourist trap is the coming opening of a casino, which will be Singapore's first. They are obviously targeting the Chinese, the Taiwanese and the Koreans, who normally end up in Malaysia's Genting Highlands where all the casinos are. We asked taxi drivers how they liked the idea of casinos opening in their city, and to a man they seemed to welcome it. But you already have so many tourists, I said. Wouldn't that worsen traffic and send hotel rates up? I threw in also the social costs of such a dubious project. But they felt Singapore could use more tourists, and that the authorities could handle the seamy side of it.

* * *

By way of teasing the cab driver, my husband said that there are already so many tourists in Singapore that the overflow should go to the Philippines. The cabbie countered, "The Philippines? I know it's a beautiful place, but you have peace and order problems." He had heard that everyone in the Philippines had a gun or that it's so easy to get one. Then there's the Abu Sayyaf.

He must have read the big Straits Times story that morning that spoke of the bandit group's threat to bomb churches during Holy Week. "You really have a lovely country," he said, "but your problem is how to convince people to go there." He said that after the tsunami, the tourists should go to the Philippines, but they don't "because they think it's not safe."

That's a Singapore cabbie talking, and these people have their ears on the ground.

* * *

Casino tourists may not exactly be the "quality" tourists Durano has in mind, but Singapore's not objecting to their entry. In fact, the government has built more places for both locals and tourists to enjoy themselves in, and one of them is the marina area where hotels, malls and baywalks have sprouted, with live bands, food courts and tent stores at night. The idea is to inject what they like to call a "soul" into the city state, which is famous for its shopping and its gospel of efficiency and work, work, work.

* * *

A friend of ours was telling us that this tiny island state, which is about the size of Subic, put up all those enticing places around the marina in order to help people "feel romantic." If they feel romantic, he says, perhaps they'd really be serious about wanting to have babies. As economist Bernie Villegas has been pointing out, for two decades the authorities in Singapore have discouraged married couples from having more than one baby, but this has resulted in zero growth and it's now realizing that this is not good. In fact it's a kingsize problem there.

* * *

As a Singaporean friend explained, the city state has a population of four million, but studies show that it needs about six million in order to operate the island-state efficiently. The problem is that Singaporeans don't want to have babies after having been brainwashed into not having them. Despite various gimmicks about "romantic escapades" and "romantic interludes," *wala pa rin*—the growth rate is a straight horizontal line. So now Singapore is welcoming foreign workers of just about all types to study and train and eventually work there. In fact, we met a number of young Filipino women working in hotels, department stores and malls who are doing on-the-job training for six months. Apparently there is a tie-up between their schools in the Philippines and Singapore agencies, and doubtless many of them will end up working there.

The Eucharist and caring for creation

COMMENTARY

Fr. Sean McDonagh, SSC

(Note: On Holy Thursday, Catholics all over the world commemorate Jesus' institution of the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist at the last Supper.—Ed.)

THE WORD "eucharist" comes from the Greek word *eucharistia* which means thanksgiving. The origins of the Prayer of Thanksgiving at Mass lie in the prayer of blessing and thanks over food which was about to be consumed at a paschal meal. In this prayer, God's action is not seen as something that happened in the dim and distant past to one generation of Israelites and merely commemorated by their descendants. Now, every generation is seen to have been liberated from slavery in Egypt (Ex. 12; 26-7).

Memory is at the heart of the Christian Eucharist as we recall God's greatest act of love, which unfolds in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but may have eternal life (Jn. 3: 16).

Thanking God for the gifts of creation has been present in Eucharistic prayers from the very beginning. Today, creation themes are still found in Eucharistic prayers.

Given the global and Philippine environmental crisis, the minor role that creation plays in the Eucharistic prayers is unfortunate and should be changed.

For a variety of historical and theological reasons the liturgical texts on creation are based almost exclusively on the Bible, especially the book of Genesis. Although these texts can and often do promote a caring attitude toward all creation, they are, nevertheless, based on an obsolete science and cosmology.

Modern science describes how the universe emerged from the mysterious fireball, how the elements were forged in the galactic cauldrons, how the solar system originated, the dynamics which shaped planet Earth, the first flickering of life, its profusion and development, and the process whereby crucial ecosystems were established over hundreds of million of years and are present to us now.

The details of this fascinating journey, gleaned from the data of the natural sciences have, in recent times, been woven into an emergent, dynamic story by scientists and cosmologists.

Liturgists should weave these two traditions together in local Eucharistic prayers. These prayers ought to dwell not just in the general outlines of the emergence of the Earth as God's gift. They should also be a concrete telling of the story of God's love and creativity as expressed in the Philippine archipelago.

This means thanking God for our unique environment, especially for the beauty and fruitfulness of the tropical forest, mangroves and coral reefs. The Philippines is blessed with a fantastic variety of creatures, yet they are becoming extinct at an alarming rate.

Such Eucharistic prayers should draw from local natural history, biology, culture and a localized theology of creation. A liturgy rising from this milieu would reconnect a worshipping people with their immediate landscape through the use of poetic language, images, gestures, music and dance. It would reestablish the intimacy between Filipinos and their environment as in the case of indigenous communities like the T'boli.

If this were a regular feature of Sunday Mass, Christians would be empowered to protect their forests, mountains, rivers and other ecosystems against foreign and local despoilers and plunderers.

Over the past decade Christians have become more concerned about the extensive and, often, irreversible destruction of the environment. In 1988, the Philippine bishops wrote a pastoral letter on environmental destruction titled "What is happening to our beautiful world? "

The Catholic Church, globally and in the Philippines, has been slower to recognize the energizing power which good, imaginative liturgy might have in transforming the way Christians relate both to other human beings and the rest of creation.

Since the dawn of human history men and women have sought to express how the deepest mysteries of their lives and the values of their society are bound with the rhythms of the Earth and the cosmos.

Eucharistic prayers in the Missal of Paul VI thank the Father for all the blessings of creation. "Source of life and goodness, you have created all things to fill your creatures with every blessing and lead all men (people) to the joyful vision of your glory." The priest solemnly intones: "Father, you are holy indeed, and all creation rightly gives you praise."

Pope John Paul II is aware of this cosmic dimension of the Eucharist. In "Ecclesia de Eucharistia," he reminds us: "The various scenario of celebrations of the Eucharist have given me a powerful experience of its universal and, so to speak, cosmic characters. Yes, cosmic, because even when the Eucharist is celebrated on a humble altar it is always in some way celebrated on the altar of the world... It embraces and permeates all creation. The Son of God became man in order to restore all creation, in one supreme act of praise, to the One who made it from nothing. He, the Eternal High Priest who by the blood of the Cross entered the eternal sanctuary, thus gives back to the Creator and Father all creation redeemed."

Irish Columban missionary Fr. Sean McDonagh is a noted ecologist and author. He worked among the T'boli of Mindanao for 20 years. He has written a number of books, the latest of which is "The End of Life: The Horror of Extinction" published in 2004.

San Pablo de los Montes (2)

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

THE MATERIAL of the San Pablo Church, limestone and bricks, was very strong and it was designed in the Gothic style that Pedro de Castro referred to as German. The walls were two *varas* thick (.84 meters=1 vara) and three *varas* high from the ground to the cornice. Its length was 76 *varas* and its width 20 without counting the buttresses, which were many and huge, the sacristy and other accessories.

The bell tower was very low due to the frequency of earthquakes. The convent, which was older than the church, was made of limestone and brick as well. It was constructed under Father Orosco and had six rooms or cells and one staircase that would not have been out of place in a palace. The foundations of the church were laid in the 17th century by Fr. Juan Labao, but it was Fr. Francisco de Loreaga who finished it.

The main *retablo* was an object of exquisite sculpture composed of very fine molave. It was in two parts with various ionic columns and in the niches different statues of saints of the order interspersed with some very well carved bas reliefs by D. Juan de los Santos, under the supervision of Fr. Francisco Cabrera.

De los Santos was a native of San Pablo and served as sacristan for 40 years. He was also responsible for the jewelry of San Agustin in Manila, all of which were made in San Pablo. This same man carved the *retablo mayor* of San Agustin de Manila and many others. (De Castro is apparently referring to the old *retablo*, not the 1790 one that was the work of Sangleys as the characters that it had on its back would attest.)

He was also a skillful silversmith and jeweler, making the silver ornaments and jewelry of the church (stolen by the British together with the three bells when they pillaged the town in 1773 after taking the plaza of Manila) as recorded in the church archives.

The church in San Pablo had many rich ornaments of cloth, of gold and silver, made in Canton de la China, many pieces of white and colored metal. What remained after the sack was the silver monstrance, which was so beautiful it could have been shown off in Toledo. This beautiful monstrance, the parochial cross, processional candlestick, altar tablets, stands, incense burners, chalices and other pieces of jewelry were all made by De Santos.

One of the pieces wrought in silver by De Santos for San Agustin was a tower that served as a tabernacle, where the monstrance was kept and displayed on Holy Thursday. It was 9.5 feet in height constructed in five tiers. The first tier was octagonal with Doric columns, adornments in low reliefs, and other carvings in the niches. It had silver statues of the doctors of the Church. The second tier had smaller statues. The third had Corinthian columns with various angels in the cornices, medals, small figures and little bells in the inter-columns. In the center of the body was the monstrance of fine gold decorated with diamonds and enameled in various stones. The small monstrance was enclosed in a larger gold monstrance more than half a *vara* tall. The fourth tier had the same columns, pedestals, cornices, friezes, and much fine work. The fifth was the very gracious copula topped with a cross. The tower weighed 564 *marcos* and 7 *octavos* that amounted to 11 *arrobas*, 12 pounds and nearly an ounce of silver without counting the monstrance. All the silver and more were taken to London by Commander Draper in 1763.

The town was part of the province of La Laguna, until Governor Arandia ceded it to the mayor of Batangas and established here the royal rope factory of cabo negro for the king's vessels because of the abundance of that palm. The area was filled with rivers and streams of potable and sweet water. From there until the town of Tiaong (another precious garden) was two hours by horseback.

The town had seven streams: Banadero, Balayong, Casayian, Cavati, Balanga, Sabasin and Balig. But the priests and the mayors only drank from a special spring in Botocan. Within the town was a big lake and five small lagoons, but the water was not potable although fish and shrimps were abundant.

In the barrio of Tignin, there was a small lagoon with its strange gulley so that during the dry season the waters increased and during the rainy season no water was left. It was true that there were crocodiles in these lagoons, but it was said that they had bitten neither animals nor men because they had plenty of fish to eat. The same thing was said about the lagoon of Candaba, which was so full of *dalag* that the crocs didn't bother the fishermen on its banks.

There was a river called Lagnas that sprung from the big mountain toward the town of Sariaya. During the rainy season there was as much water above land as below and the waters that run from there to Tiaong were very cold and raw. To this was attributed the infertility of the women of that town.

Hardwood trees included ebony, anubing, tindalo, narra, tamarind, palomaria, sibucao, camachile for tanning leather, molave of three types, baticulin, banaba, lanete, mangachapuy, from which incense was produced, and a thousand others used to construct ships, buildings and machinery.

From Mt. Banajao came the red-colored tree trunks that were sent as a gift to King Carlos III. The principal tables of the royal palace were made of these. Many of the tables, sacristy boxes and desks in Manila came from here and other pieces of value that are scattered throughout the provinces of Tayabas, Lalaguna and Balayan.

(De Castro, Pedro Amadeo, "Una Historia de la Provincia de Batangas," 1790)

Lesson in acceptance

YOUNG BLOOD

Mahalia Jordan B. Abella

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

THEY say that when you write about something you know—a lesson, an experience, a passion—words come effortlessly. I've tried to write about death a couple of times, only to backspace, highlight paragraphs, press delete. I couldn't decide on the mood: somber or light? I gravitated toward a somber tone, because after all, deaths are hardly considered happy events. And death was a tricky subject, because I would never know about it 100 percent, since I was still alive the last time I checked. But I wanted to say the little I knew about it, having been exposed to it firsthand.

The day I realized that Papa was going to die was not the day of his death. It was a few weeks before that. I found him lying in bed, trying to sleep. But cancer, at its most vicious, denies you every kind of comfort you take for granted in the course of your life. Sleep doesn't come and you feel so helpless.

Papa held on for a few more weeks, perhaps out of consideration for us, timing, God's blessing, fate, who knew really? But there comes a point when after seeing a person you love battle an illness for so long, you learn to let go and wish him whatever grace he needs in at that point, even if that means death. After all, death is just a moment before a person lives again.

Papa had a distinct laugh that rang in your ears long after you've heard it. He was usually a quiet man who demonstrated the saying "Speak softly, but carry a big stick." Speak softly he did, on most occasions—unless he head a joke he thoroughly enjoyed. He was never one to brag about his achievements: the songs he'd written, the places he'd been to, the company he kept. A gifted musician, he was a self-taught guitar player who started strumming Beatles songs in his teens. It was never just a hobby, because he never tired of it, never gave it up. His one great love was music and that never changed in the years that rolled by. He started playing professionally in 1976 and continued doing so through the years as he wrote songs, played the bass and sang back-up vocals for bands like Ega Past, Coritha and the Popsicles, Pen-Pen, The Jerks, Asin, Local Brown, and Grupong Pendong (with the latter for 10 years or so).

I know that to him, music was what made his life worthwhile, every single day that he lived. I have no doubt that it is still a part of his after-life, wherever that is. I console myself with the thought that death is a great and comforting thing for those who have experienced it.

Those of us whom he left behind cope with death in different ways. Some choose to stay away and forget, some stay and exhaust all feeling. Death is a traumatic event and it never leaves you the same. It's a great paradox because you feel diminished and strengthened at the same time. You know you will probably be never the same again, but you also feel better equipped to handle life's strange and painful tests.

I used to think that when someone in my family died, I would also die because of heartbreak. But two years and two significant deaths after, that has yet to happen. Although the pain and feeling of loss are very sublime, you get past that somehow. Time tempers the pain. You realize that it takes more to make you cry and very little to make you appreciate the people you love. You find yourself to be more compassionate with people who are dealing with a loved one's illness or death. You will probably never have all the answers, but you know you have it in you to understand life's demands. You learn to choose your battles, and let go of everything else not worthy of your worry. You appreciate the meaning of life being too fleeting to waste on needless fears; you grasp the meaning of it being too important to waste on bearing grudges about family issues or circumstances in life, because they won't matter when the person is gone.

It took Papa's death for me to realize that I should have tried harder and told him more often what he meant to me. But then today is too late for regrets. Death changes us in ways that other events in our lives never can.

One famous saying puts death in simple terms: "There are only two things inevitable in life, death and taxes." I am tempted to argue that this does not apply to our country where you can probably coerce, bribe or talk your way out of anything (especially taxes)—and even death, in certain instances, given the right connections. But that is yet another Youngblood article to write.

The little that I know of death is that, more than teaching you about pain, it is probably the greatest lesson in acceptance you ever learn. And it will always inevitably lead you back to a Being greater than yourself: He who has a hand in all these. Whatever your personal beliefs are, whatever you conceive Him to be, God will always be a presence you cannot discount, and our lives, our deaths are, to put it simply, in His hands. Can things be any more comforting than that?

Mahalia Jordan B. Abella, 26 works as an human resource consultant for a company in Makati. She believes her father, Jose Vicente "Jovi" Abella, is part of greater things in a greater place where he is jamming with his favorite musicians and where music sounds even better and gigs last 24/7.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

If you are sending your contributions by e-mail, please address it to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address and information about your age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with.

THEY SAID

Superfluous

"It will be superfluous to impose a log ban in areas where there are no more trees to cut."

—*Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri on the proposed selective logging*

Extraordinary

"This is an extraordinary act of the chamber in response to extraordinary demands of the time."

—*Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr., after the Senate junked its own version of the national budget and adopted the House version*

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UP should take cue from the Bernidos

CONGRATULATIONS to the Bernidos of Bohol who were featured in the article titled "'Learning by doing' could revolutionize RP education" (PDI, 2/20/05). I am happy to read about them. It's more than 20 years since we parted ways. Marivic and I were in the same batch (BS Physics '82). We were only three in that batch. The idealism instilled in us by our mentors (e.g., Dr. Roger Posadas) has not been wasted for we chose to stay in the country and share our knowledge and expertise with our fellow Filipinos. The experiences of Marivic and Chris in putting up a school are almost the same as the ones I went through. Let me cite my own to point out some defects in our system.

It appears from the article that Marivic was prevented from teaching because she had no license. But she could not take the licensure exam for teachers because she had no education units. She was therefore forced to take education units despite the fact that she already had earned a Ph.D and had taught in the University of the Philippines for a number of years. Why not take away having education units as a requirement for taking a licensure exam? After all, passing the Licensure Exams for Teachers is not an assurance of competence. This has been shown by the results of a recent English proficiency test given to teachers. Many of them failed the exam. Now the Department of Education is requiring would-be teachers to pass another test aside from the LET before they can be employed in public schools.

Why did the Bernidos leave UP? My guess is, they were not happy with the remuneration. Because of the salary standardization law, their salaries could go up only to a certain limit. Thus, the best minds in UP get to be pirated by private enterprises and universities. Even the quality of students entering the university is getting lower and lower. This is because special treatment and considerations are being given to graduates of public high schools. I heard that some private school students transfer to public high schools on their fourth year to be able to pass the Upcat.

There is nothing wrong in giving preference to the poor but this should not be to the detriment of the quality of education in UP. Why not improve the standard of education in public high schools so that more of their students can pass the Upcat, instead of UP sacrificing quality just to accommodate public school students? UP should know that there are private high schools, like the Bernidos' Central Visayas Institute, which cater to financially needy but brilliant students. If the practices and policies in UP are not changed, we might as well bid UP as the nation's premier university goodbye.

—EDUARDO R. CONDAT,
CDC School,
Cauayan City, Isabela

Justice system should get half of pork barrel

I HAVE serious doubts as to whether the President will succeed in her campaign against graft and corruption during her term of office. Will her instructions against graft and corruption be faithfully carried down the line—to the front liners? Will the legislative and judicial branches of government follow the lead of the President? That is a big question.

The deterrent to graft and corruption is punishment. But it takes a very long time to mete out penalties for grafters? The cases involving corruption take years to decide. And because of this, concerned citizens are not inclined to help in the President's anti-corruption campaign.

Obviously, the problem of corruption is being addressed more through remedial measures. The focus of the government's drive is to recover ill-gotten wealth, but nothing is being done to prevent graft and corruption. Why not organize in every town and city, an anti-graft and corruption body consisting of volunteers—maybe, from the ranks of senior citizens—known for their independence, impartiality, probity and integrity? But they should be chosen not by the mayors of the localities. Unless our judicial system and our legislative system will cooperate in the campaign, graft and corruption will stay.

The problem of our judicial system is manpower. There are not enough qualified judges and not enough qualified prosecutors to handle the cases being filed all over the country. It may surprise you to know that only five or 10, out of an average of 20 cases, get to be heard. Trial postponements and delaying tactics aggravate the situation. Congress should have provided enough manpower for our judicial system.

Our law enforcement system is also weak. Policemen cannot immediately act on complaints because they lack transportation facilities. Gasoline is not available to them. They are reluctant to serve warrants of arrest because they have to spend personal money for their transportation, especially in bringing the accused to jail.

May I, therefore, suggest that 50 percent of our legislators' pork barrel be appropriated for the hiring of qualified judges and prosecutors. I emphasize the word "qualified" because I know for a fact that some prosecutors and judges do not perform their job according to law. The Supreme Court has its hands full with cases involving decisions that have been handed down by the lower courts in abuse of discretion.

Politicians should recognize the independence of the judiciary. The members of the judiciary should not feel intimidated by politicians—to keep democracy alive.

—THEMISTOCLES R. MONTALBAN,
Neptune Street, Bahay Toro, Quezon City

Wrong way to celebrate womanhood

I FIND it ironic that the beauty pageant Bb. Pilipinas Charities chose March 8, International Women's Day, for the media presentation of its candidates in their "official" swimsuit. I saw it on TV news later that day. Was it a way for the pageant organizers to give their contest a semblance of relevance?

The International Women's Day is meant to highlight the important role of women in society. It is also a day originally intended for women to celebrate their womanhood and personhood amid the still many burdens and cases of discrimination they face in today's society? I think the pageant organizers were a bit off-tangent there.

To top it all, the news program I was watching put the feature on the pageant candidates in its entertainment portion. This, to me, highlighted even more the notion of many people about the "entertainment value" that women's bodies provide.

—MCS ABIS,
zsyle@yahoo.com

GMA at DRILON Vampira ng manggagawa. -BMP
Pag-apruba sa VAT Paghihirap ng lahat -BMP
DRILON: sinisipsip an[illegible] ng [illegible]wa -B[illegible]
12% na VAT, KONTRA MAHIRAP!
12% VAT KONTRA MAHIRAP
VAT WATCH
FLAVIER
ENRILE
PANGILINAN
BIAZON
MADRIGAL
VILLAR
PIMENTEL
-PM

A GOOD number of Filipinos are definitely against VAT.

Cheap propaganda

THE ARROYO administration's spin doctors have all come out in force to assure the people that the VAT increase will not affect the poor; that it will, in fact, benefit the people as the revenues will be channeled to social services. This claim is cheap propaganda, to say the least, as most revenues automatically will go to debt servicing.

The VAT "is an indirect tax and the amount of tax may be shifted or passed on to the buyer, transferee or lessee of the goods, properties or services." (National Revenue Code) In VAT, it is therefore the end-consumer who bears the greater tax burden.

Any increase in the prices of consumer goods and services will make life even harder for Filipinos, particularly the poorest among them, whose earnings are not enough to meet basic needs. IBON estimates that with a higher VAT, the deficit in the monthly budget of low-income Filipino families (earning an average of P2,200 a month) would increase by as much as 65 percent. A huge shortfall in the monthly incomes of poor Filipino families would lead to more borrowings and debts.

The proposed VAT exemption on the sale or importation of petroleum products will also result in additional price hikes. The claim that these price hikes will not be outrageous since "the Philippines has one of the lowest pump prices in the region" does not take into account the multiplier effect of such hikes on the prices of goods and services.

Filipinos oppose an increase and a coverage expansion in VAT. This was shown in an IBON survey conducted on Dec. 20-29, 2004. Government should heed this sentiment. Instead of increasing VAT rates, it should pursue more creative solutions to its fiscal problems—like scrapping onerous debts, improving tax collection, addressing graft and corruption in government, and going after big-time tax evaders. Some economic analysts say that just by improving VAT collection, the government can eliminate the need for a higher VAT.

Government must also consider reinstituting the tariff rates on highly liberalized and sensitive agricultural and industrial products at their pre-WTO levels; the country has been losing some P100 billion annually due to its WTO commitments on tariff reduction.

Most of all, there must be a fundamental change in the government's system of taxation. Taxes should be equitable—meaning they should be fair, just, reasonable and proportionate to a taxpayers' ability to pay. Being an indirect tax, the VAT—as implemented—clearly violates this principle.

In underdeveloped economies where income inequality is wide, it is more appropriate to levy direct taxes on income and property so that taxation would have a redistributive effect. The government should focus on improving tax collection in these areas, rather than on pursuing indirect taxes—if it really wants not to burden the poor.

—ROSARIO BELLA GUZMAN,
executive director,
IBON Foundation Inc.,
SCC Bldg.,
4427 Interior Old Sta Mesa, Manila

Wonderfully moving Inquirer feature

WE would like to comment on Manuel Quezon III's wonderfully moving feature in the Feb. 17 issue of the Philippine Daily Inquirer. It was about the tribute to his grandfather and the Filipino people, which was given in Cincinnati, Ohio, USA a few weeks ago. He so beautifully expressed the deep gratitude and closeness the Jews, who were saved from certain death at the hands of the Nazis, feel for President Quezon and the Filipino people. We are so glad that the story of their bravery and compassion has now come to the attention of the world. Quezon III was a very important part of the Cincinnati event and his intelligent and stirring speech at the final program brought all those assembled to their feet. We would personally like to thank him and the INQUIRER for his article.

—MARCIA AND RALPH PREISS,
m.s.preiss@alum.mit.edu

Rice terraces not in Benguet

I HAPPENED to watch a TV commercial promoting the Department of Tourism's program "Biyahe Tayo" (the one with Ms Regine Velasquez). It was alright, but it had a glaring error.

A video clip showing the famous Ifugao Rice Terraces in the background had a line that read: "I love (symbolized by a heart) Benguet." Did the researchers do their job? I don't think you will find rice terraces in Benguet. The ones shown the commercial are certainly not found in Benguet.

As a full-blooded Ifugao, it saddens me to see such ignorance on national television, and how little our fellow Filipinos know about us, Ifugaos. It even comes as an insult to Ifugaos, whose forefathers built this "majestic wonder." The rice terraces, which have made the Philippines world-famous, are part of our ethnic identity.

—JAN RHYS D. GOPENG,
Lt. 12 Blk. 16, Mt. Fuji St.,
Cresta Verde Subd.,
Novaliches, Quezon City

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INBOX

Some Abu Sayyaf members detained in Camp Bagong Diwa killed their 3 prison guards, in an attempt to escape. Some civilians and Abu Sayyaf members died as a result. What do you think of the quality of security in our police and military detention areas?

Only in d philippines. 1st of all, d Abu Sayyaf were in a supposedly MAXIMUM security area, yet dey were able 2 kill d guards.
—Gerard Gumban, *davao city*

it is very alarming & disgusting! Very poor ang quality.
—Jennifer S. Cabote, *Santiago city*

the incident only shows that they are very lax. Why mix ordinary criminals with d ASG! Our GOVT shud wake up!
—Verona BALANGUE, cagayan de oro city

veryvery poor security veryveryvery rich in corruption...lumang kwento n yan.
—Noel madrid, *bulacan*

kulang pa, dapat ciguro i-train sila ng bgOng techniques para sa kabutihan ng lahat
—sharlyne lacbay, *pampanga*

these jail officers are too lax in their duties. & in order 2 avoid dis situation, fast-track case hearings.
—Lorna A. Gulguluway, *Lagawe, Ifugao*

Most lack quality, lack of training.
—BUENA Garro, *infanta, Quezon*

Restructure the detention system. However, consider also dat prisoners r humans capable of lving. Mor dan tyt secrty is needed.
—simon Ibarra, *qc*

d security underestimated d ability of d ASG. dey shudve executed vigilance in a more strict way. dey must b seri0us wid their w0rk.
—ma.flora arcenal, *davao city*

We should enact anti-terror laws. Suspected hardcore terrorists should be isolated from common criminals.
—Rizalde Cabrera, *Olongapo City*

kind of a lousy & loose quality & a lax & lull in security!

Ano sa palagay nyo?

—may g. malapitan, *quezon city*

i think police needs more extreme training regarding security as what abu sayyaf had, so dat dey can't be fooled by prisoners.
—rosemarie abner, *quezon city*

deplorable laxity, d situation of all detention are not conducive to reform a person. Condition can b compared 2 hell.
—Roland vingno, *Laguna*

Nakaka-insecure ang security sa detention. Militar pulis bilanggo, hiraman na ng mukha sa sikip!
—au batnag, *quezon cty*

Quality of security? When the head is incompetent, the rest of the body follows.
—Cesar Marinius M. Reyes, *Agusan del Norte*

These are not d lapses of police n military but of BJMP who are holding jails nationwide. They have violated S.O.P. in jail.
—frande echaluce, *Legazpi city*

quality of security stinks. procedures shud b given a long and thorough review. then changes have to be made
—Gerard Gumban, *davao city*

What do you think should be done to the vendors in Bohol who sold the cassava snacks that resulted in the deaths and poisoning of young school kids?

Let human consideration prevail. it is not the liking of the vendors dat this tragedy happened.
—Lorna Gulguluway, *Lagawe, Ifugao*

investgatiOns shoud cOme firSt b4 aCcusing d vendors.
—venus L. serafin, *zamboanga city*

they should b given d corresponding punishment 4 negligence
—inna cuevas, *makati*

Dey must be penalized as dey were liable for d incident. Deyr aware kids eat their food, so dey should have been more careful.
—Janet Deriada, *Pasay City*

nothing if not done purposely. coz losing family members, friends, neighbors, business is like being in a nightmare wide-awake.
—Stella Lim, *Mandaue City*

Vendors involved in the food poisoning should be punished. Innocence is no exception to the rule or law.
—Prescy Aguilar, *Quezon City*

Dapat imbestigahan munà cla bago husgahan at patawan ng parusa, hindi rin naman nila ginusto ang pangyayari.
—AMINAH V.MALYARI, *pasig city*

vendors in Bohol shud undergo health seminars 2 ensure no more ppisoning n deaths will occur. Impose sanctions on violators.
—mercedes TEJERERO, *Valenzuela City*

a psychological test shud be conducted apart from thorough police investigation.
—Roland vingno, *laguna*

Their negligence led 2 d loss of innocent lives. Innocent as 2 motive, law says they be charged in court .
—Rizalde Cabrera, *Olongapo City*

No one is 2 blame bcoz even d vendors were afflicted. Lets keep d issue at bay as d situation is only endemic.
—willie basa, *laguna*

Ban those careless from vending! accidents do not just happen, it is caused by their CARELESSNESS!
—may g. malapitan, *quezon city*

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Toll on drivers using NLEx: ₱17,000 a month

MABALACAT, Pampanga—Everyday, driver Jorge Capati keeps a plastic bag near his seat. The receipts he places in the bag, if converted into cash, amount to P17,000.

That amount is what Capati has paid for using a 17-km stretch of the North Luzon Expressway since Feb. 10 when the Manila North Tollways Corp. (MNTC) took over the management of the 84-km road from the state-owned Philippine National Construction Corp.

Capati, showing the bag of receipts, did not hide his anger. From P9, he now pays P57 for a single trip.

"I used to spend P2,808 monthly. The cost of my toll fees has increased by about five times. I would have spent that for more food on [my family's] table," Capati said.

His fellow drivers plying the City of San Fernando-Dau route share the same woes, their officials told the INQUIRER.

So is it for more than 5,000 drivers using the NLEx from Angeles City, Mabalacat, Magalang, Arayat, Macabebe, Masantol, Apalit in Pampanga; Calumpit and Malolos in Bulacan.

Tom Talavera, spokesperson of the Samahan ng Tsuper at Operator Nationwide (Stop), said they are all demanding a rollback of the NLEx toll rates.

He said Stop is spearheading a transport strike on March 28 over the NLEx rates and to demand for the scrapping of the oil deregulation law that removed government's control over oil prices.

"The cost of using the NLEx is so much. It is exorbitant. What little earning is made from driving goes to MNTC," Talavera said.

The MNTC said an agreement, which was signed by former President Fidel Ramos in 1998, set the rates. In that agreement, the current base toll rate was set at 80 centavos. But the rates were also driven by fluctuating inflation and exchange rates.

This was a reason the toll rate was about 500 percent higher than PNCC rates before the Feb. 10 takeover.

Current NLEx rates are P2.48 per kilometer for cars, P6.20 for buses and light trucks, and P7.45 for heavy trucks and trailers.

Alvarado said the agreement was unconstitutional because the TRB recently granted the MNTC a 30-year franchise to operate the NLEx. He said the original franchise to run the NLEx was given to the PNCC.

Alvarado said only Congress has the right to approve the granting of franchises.

Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Failure to get TRO bad news, says Bulacan solon

THE INCREASE in toll rates at the NLEx has prompted Bulacan Rep. Wilhelmino Sy-Alvarado to file a taxpayer's suit against the Department of Transportation and Communication and the MNTC.

Alvarado asked Judge Albert Fonacier of the Malolos regional trial court to order the annulment of the supplemental toll operation agreement (Stoa) being implemented by officials of the DOTC, the Toll Regulatory Board, the MNTC and the PNCC.

But Alvarado, also chair of the Central Luzon Congressional Caucus, said Fonacier on Thursday withheld action on the motion for a temporary restraining order on the collection of new toll rates at the NLEx.

The judge, he said, required another hearing and presentation of additional witnesses on March 28.

Marlene Ochoa, MNTC vice president for public information, declined to comment on Alvarado's complaint, saying this was already in court.

Alvarado said his failure to secure a TRO was bad news for travellers who would troop to the provinces for the Holy Week break. *Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Gov sitting on quarry transfer, says vice gov

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Pampanga Gov. Mark Lapid has still not referred to the provincial board for review the proposal of the Natural Resources Development Corp. to collect quarry taxes in the province.

"The governor seemed to be sitting on the proposal," Vice Gov. Joseller Guiao said on Tuesday.

The House committee on natural resources has set a March 16 deadline for Lapid to submit the proposal for review of the provincial board.

The NRDC, the corporate arm of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, succeeded in re-filing the proposal during the committee's March 1 hearing, the second held on Resolution 267.

Pampanga Rep. Reynaldo Aquino filed it to determine the income-generating prospects of Pampanga's quarry industry.

The provincial board, voting 7-3 on Jan. 24, rejected the proposal, citing the exclusive right of the provincial government to collect local taxes while questioning the process by which Guiao and NRDC Chair Victor Corpus "railroaded" it.

Lapid told the INQUIRER on Tuesday that he has yet to read the proposed memorandum of agreement. He said provincial administrator Fidel Arcenas received the draft only on Friday.

Lapid said the only copy he had since the last hearing was NRDC's letter of intent to discuss the proposal.

But Guiao could not believe Lapid's reason, saying NRDC president Angelico Salud gave Lapid a copy of the proposal after the congressional hearing recently.

Guiao said the proposal was not included in the agenda of the board's regular session on Monday.

He then proposed a public consultation, which they agreed to hold.

Guiao told the board the consultation was part of their commitment to the House committee to "expedite the process for reconsidering the NRDC proposal."

In the March 1 hearing and under grilling by Pampanga Rep. Juan Miguel Arroyo, two of the seven board members who spoke under oath for their group said they were not actually opposing the proposal.

It was on that note that Agusan del Norte Rep. Leovigildo Banaag, committee chair, and the four Pampanga legislators asked Lapid and the seven board members to reconsider reviewing the proposal.

Under it, the NRDC guaranteed a net annual minimum income of P36 million for the provincial government and another P36 million for the towns and villages from where the sand is derived. The combined amount was six times bigger than the P10.5 million the capitol collected throughout 2004.

The income, Corpus said, would increase depending on the number of trucks that haul sand from Pampanga. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

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Gov't urged: Help Filipinos in Malaysia

By Desiree Caluza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—The Malaysian government's drive against at least 500,000 undocumented Filipinos in that country has led to cases of human rights violations among Filipinos, according to the party-list group Migrante.

In a forum here last week, Migrante officials appealed to government officials to check on these reported abuses and help Filipinos who were found to have overstayed or illegally entered Malaysia.

Maita Santiago, Migrante secretary general, said the involvement of members of the Malaysian government's People's Volunteer Corps in tracking down illegal migrants in Malaysia has led to the abuse of Filipinos.

Santiago said their investigation showed that these volunteers were paid 80 Malaysian ringgit (P1,134) for every undocumented migrant arrested.

Labor export

"If you are wondering why the Arroyo administration is not opposing these cases of human rights violation, it is because it is focused on intensifying the policies of the labor export market. But the government should realize that the rights of these undocumented Filipinos are being violated," she said.

Santiago said their information showed that the volunteers have not been trained in humane arrest procedures, respect for human rights and international humanitarian law.

"The crackdown, therefore, is highly open to abuse of authority," she said.

Santiago said even the Malaysian non-government organizations are critical of the treatment that undocumented Filipinos have been getting.

Filipinos caught overstaying or without proper travel documents are detained, fined or whipped with rattan sticks six times before they are deported.

Responsibility

Santiago said the government's responsibility was to ensure the safety and security of Filipinos and protect their rights in Malaysia and in other countries.

She said it should ask the Malaysian government to ensure that the Filipinos' rights are respected.

A Migrante position paper said the government should organize an inspection of detention centers in Sabah, Malaysia, to check on the condition of Filipinos there.

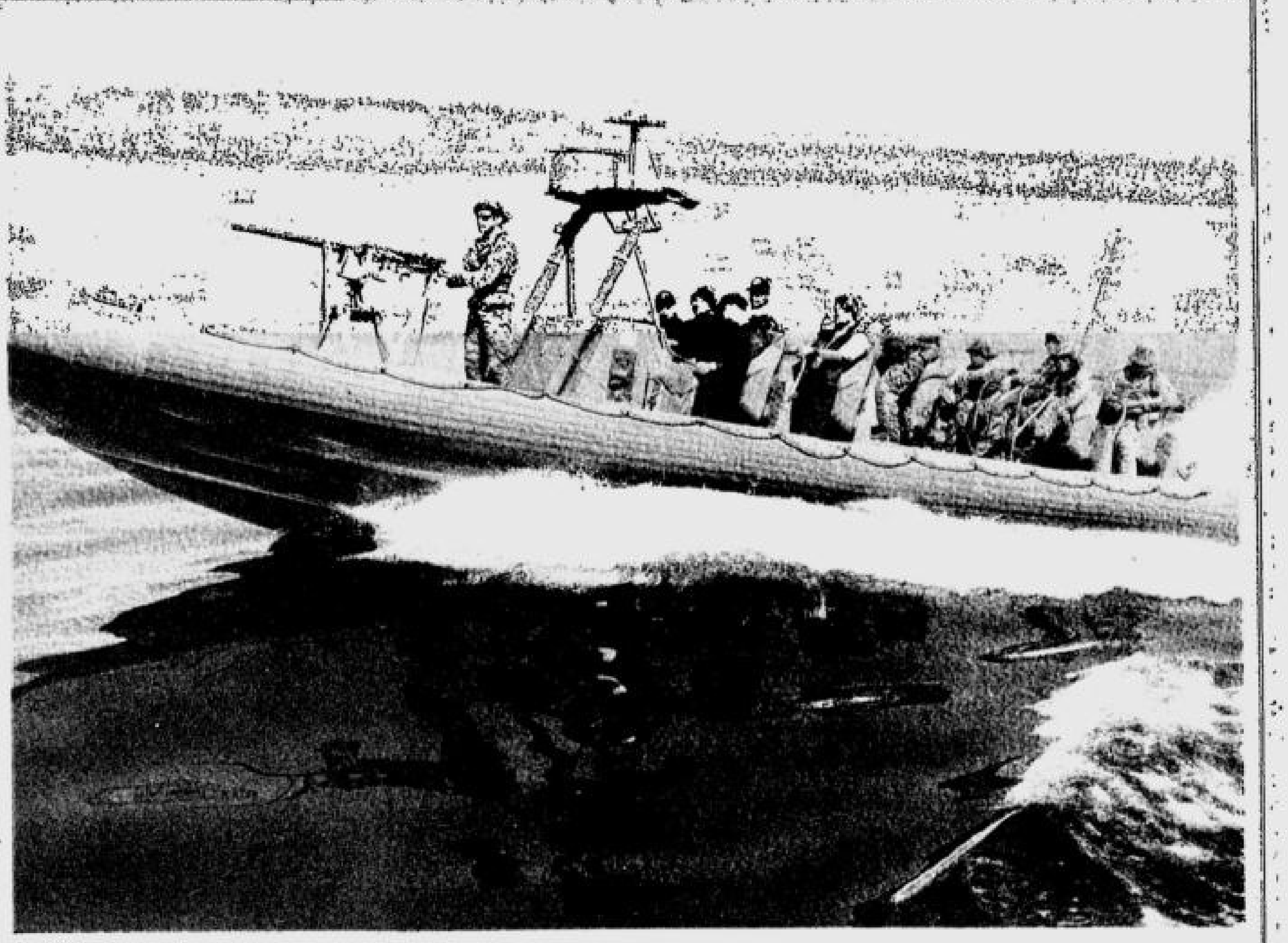
"[We] urge Malacañang to take concrete actions to prevent the torture of [Filipinos] in Malaysia," it said.

During a round table discussion with the INQUIRER Northern Luzon Bureau correspondents on Friday, Immigration Commissioner Alipio Fernandez Jr. said since 2002, the government has been operating an inter-agency task force to look into the conditions of Filipinos in Malaysia.

He said the task force—composed of representatives of the departments of foreign affairs, labor and employment, and social welfare and development, and the Bureau of Immigration—is also addressing the problems of alleged human rights violations concerning undocumented Filipinos.

Lawyer Dina Ponciano, counsel of the regional Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, said the government could link up undocumented Filipinos to their families in the Philippines.

"But what we cannot provide [them] are benefits and other monetary insurance [that documented workers are entitled to]," she said.



ANTITERROR PATROL
EDWIN BACASMAS
Government troops use whatever sea vessel is available to patrol the seas of Lamitan, Basilan in a continuing campaign against terror groups and bandits.

Cops rescue trader after husband flees kidnappers

LOS BAÑOS, Laguna—Police rescued a businesswoman after his husband was able to escape from their abductors by jumping from the suspects' vehicle in Barangay Maahas this town over the weekend, police said yesterday.

SPO3 Bart Jamito, Los Baños police investigator, identified the victims as Jude Semania, 44, and his wife Evelyn, 37, residents of Barangay Sinagtala, Lipa City.

Jamito said traffic at the town's junction was suddenly disrupted when a man jumped from a black Isuzu Crosswind (VCL 225) at around 7:20 p.m. on Saturday.

He said when traffic policemen came over to help him, the man, who identified himself as Jude Semania, immediately told the traffic officials that he was kidnapped and that he owned the vehicle that the suspects used.

"We quickly alerted all our mobile units and the Calamba police about the incident. A car chase then ensued," Jamito told the INQUIRER.

While police cars went after the suspects, another group of lawmen rescued Evelyn from an abandoned warehouse in Barangay Maahas.

Semania later told police investigators that they were snatched by four suspects, two of whom were identified as Jack Mitra and Grace del Mundo, from their house in Lipa City hours before the kidnapping.

Jamito said the victims told them that Mitra and Del Mundo, both residents of Barangay Barandal, Calamba City, owed them P400,000.

He said the suspects went to their house and paid them P50,000 on Saturday morning.

"The suspects told the victims that they would pay their balance as soon as they got in Los Baños. But apparently the suspects wanted them killed," Jamito said.

Semania said the suspects then brought them to the warehouse.

A few hours after, Mitra allegedly took him and left her wife.

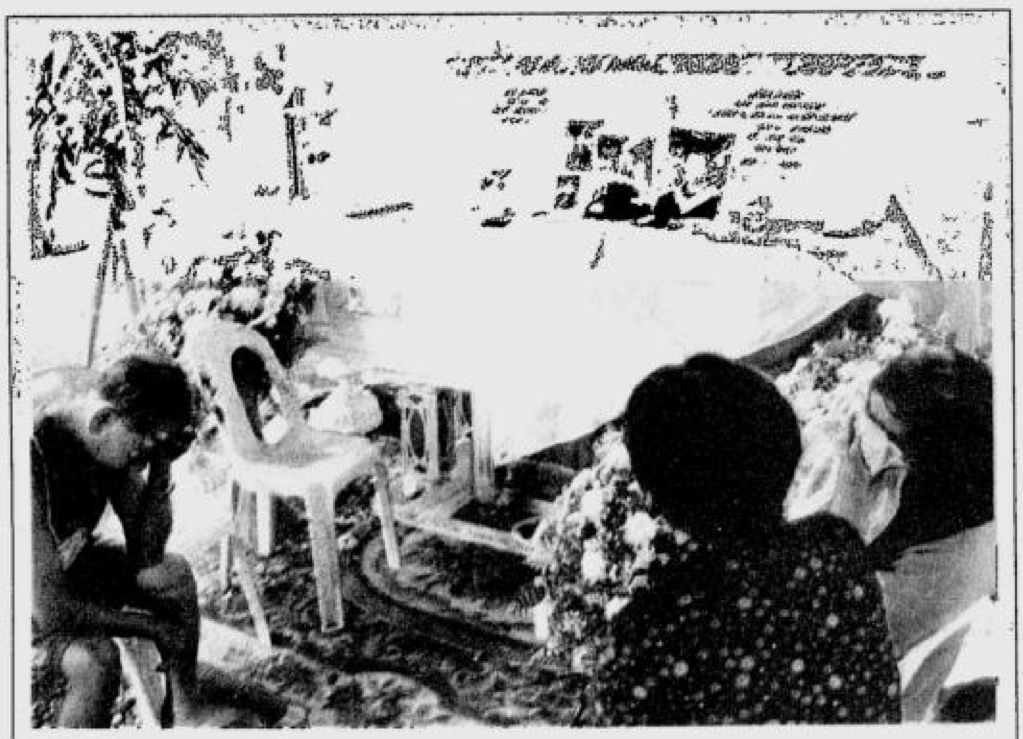
The suspects, Jamito said, told Semania that they would kill and bury him somewhere in Calamba City.

"Semania said he jumped from the vehicle when he saw uniformed men manning the traffic. He said he took the chance to escape than end up dead," Jamito said.

He said the Semanias were later brought to a nearby hospital for treatment of their wounds.

Their car was subsequently recovered in a vacant lot in Barangay Pansol in Calamba City.

He, however, said they were now having a hard time filing the case against the suspects as the victims had refused to cooperate with them. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*



GRIEF
LEONCIO BALBIN JR./PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU
Grieving Leticia Areola and a male relative weep beside the casket of PO3 Abel Areola, who was killed during the Camp Bagong Diwa assault on members of the Abu Sayyaf. Areola's body is currently in the family residence in Laslasong Norte, Sta. Maria, Ilocos Sur.

Boracay traders urge gov't to let them have titles to land in resort

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Resort and restaurant owners on Boracay Island in Aklan have urged President Macapagal-Arroyo to allow the survey and titling of lots on the island, heightening a 26-year-old ownership dispute between the government and claimants over prized lots on the island.

In a two-page letter dated March 4, the Boracay Foundation Inc. (BFI) called on the President to abide by a recent Court of Appeals (CA) ruling, upholding a lower court decision that a 1978 presidential proclamation classifying the island as a tourist and marine zone does not bar the claimants from having their lands titled.

The BFI said they were against the position of the Department of Natural Resources (DENR) that the 1,083-hectare island-resort was "forest land" and therefore, owned by the government.

Vested rights

"We reject this proposition and maintain that we have acquired vested rights on the land we occupy," Orlando Sacay, BFI vice president for external affairs, said in their letter.

The BFI is an association of more than 100 resorts, hotels and other business establishments on the island.

In an earlier letter dated Dec. 30, 2004, the group appealed to the President to issue an executive order, directing the Director of Lands to conduct a cadastral survey so that conflicting claims dating 20 years ago would be settled.

Soaring prices

The letter was signed by 31 officers and members of the BFI led by its chair Henry Chusuey and president Lara Salaver.

The prices of lots on the island have soared as tourist arrivals continue to enjoy an upswing for the past several years. A piece of property on the famous white beach now costs from P25,000 to P30,000 per square meter.

The government has stopped conducting surveys and titling of lots in Boracay after the late President Ferdinand Marcos issued Presidential Proclamation 1801 on Nov. 10, 1978.

Under the proclamation, several islands and coves, including Boracay, were declared as tourist zones and marine reserves under the administration and control of the Philippine Tourism Authority (PTA).

The lands were categorized as public-owned, giving the government the prerogative as to the management and utilization of its resources.

Camarines Norte tribe observes Holy Week in different way

PARACALE, Camarines Norte—If the Catholics observe Holy Week to remember the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ like going to Church to hear the Seven Last Words or join processions, the indigenous people, called the Kabihug, of upland Barangay Pinagbirayan, in Paracale, Camarines Norte observe it by going to the mountain, sea or river.

The community lies some 15 km from the Paracale town proper, which is about 40 km from the capital town of Daet.

Fe Velasco, 46, an honorary member of the tribe and now considered the *layaya* (princess) by the 1,250 Kabihug tribes people, told the INQUIRER that the Kabihugs, who have a strong faith in Jesus, prefer to be with nature during Holy Week.

Velasco has lived with the Kabihugs, most of whom live under trees and big stones, since she was a baby. She is a graduate of Bachelor's of Arts degree major in History and serves as the educator of the Kabihug tribes people.

She said that during Holy Week, especially on Good Friday, some of the tribesmen would trek to the mountain to hunt wild animals, especially wild pigs.

Rodolfo Bana, tribal council chieftain, said they cut the pig's teeth and turn them into necklace to serve as their amulet. "A person who possesses it would not get tired running," he said.

Some of them would spend several hours at sea to catch seafoods which they offer to Jesus, as they believe it would lead to a bountiful harvest.

Alan Aragon said Holy Week is a good time for fishing.

Velasco said that about 3 p.m. on Good Friday, the water in the river stands still. This time, the Kabihugs would submerge their bodies in the water and recite a prayer of forgiveness and ask for more blessings.

After the prayer, the Kabihugs take a bath to cleanse themselves of sins.

The tribal folk seldom take their bath on ordinary days, Velasco said.

Even though the Kabihugs still include their traditional gods and goddesses in their prayers, they already know how to say the "Our Father" and the prayer before meal, said Velasco who was the one who taught them the prayers.

The Kabihug princess said some tribesmen have visited the Peñafrancia Church in Naga City, but it was the first and the last because some lowlanders told them that if they entered the Church again, its floor would crack. *Michael Jaucian, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Rodolfo Bana, tribal council chieftain of the Kabihug tribe, is requesting for donations for the construction of a multi-purpose center for their gatherings or during bad weather. For details, contact Lorna de Claro, PSWDO, Daet, Camarines Norte (0920-2390161) or Fe Velasco, Barangay Batobalani, Paracale, Camarines Norte (0910-4027219).

INQBox Question of the Week
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Fight taxes, senator tells local execs in opposition

CALAMBA CITY—Opposition Sen. Jinggoy Estrada yesterday expressed hope for the opposition to finally unite but said a bloc is still in the dark over what direction the opposition is taking on its relations with the Arroyo administration.

Estrada said it was important for the opposition to unite to serve as a fiscalizer of government.

"Without a united opposition, we would all be like characters in the Pied Piper following the administration's tune," he said before attending graduation ceremonies at the Cavite Westpoint College in Ternate.

He said he considers his father, deposed President Joseph Estrada, as still the leader of the opposition.

"Whatever direction the opposition takes, I'm sure its leaders will consult my father first," he said.

"President Erap is still regarded as the leader of the United Opposition," he said.

As if to douse reports that the opposition was besieged with infighting, the younger Estrada said opposition leaders had not scheduled meetings within the week.

When asked if it is possible for Angara, who ran as his father's vice president in the 1998 national elections, would leave the opposition, he said: "That I will not know. It's still a puzzle to me."

But he said whether or not the opposition unites soon should not deter local government units run by officials belonging to opposition parties from pursuing programs to fight poverty and injustice.

Estrada said LGUs run by opposition officials should criticize the Arroyo administration for giving priority to the enactment of more taxes at the expense of other legislative measures now pending at the Senate promoting the welfare of local government units and communities.

"Unfortunately today, under this regime of greed, corruption and taxes, local government units are no longer cornerstones, but stones in the corner," Estrada, former national president of the League of Municipalities of the Philippines, said, recalling his speech in Cebu City recently.

He said currently, LGU executives faced uncertainties in their Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA) because this was "in constant threat and danger of being reduced and channeled to support the wasteful and extravagant spending of the national government."

"Local government units are the front-line service delivery facilities of government, in direct line of contact with our people and communities," he said.

"We need to get ourselves together to empower not just local government units but our communities," he said. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

VIZCAYA TREASURE BEN MOSES EBREO/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

A villager in Kasibu, Nueva Vizcaya shows shiitake mushrooms grown in upland villages. Introduced by a Japanese visitor in the province, propagation of shiitake mushrooms, sold at P600 per kilo, is now a major source of livelihood among upland villagers in the province.

Soldier killed while negotiating for rebs' surrender

By Jani Arnaiz
PDI Visayas Bureau

ORMOC CITY—A soldier was killed and another was wounded on Sunday afternoon when they were fired upon while negotiating with the relatives of two wounded rebels for their surrender in Barangay Sherwoodon, Albuera town in Leyte.

Col. Restituto Santos, commanding officer of the 19th Infantry Battalion based in Kananga town, Leyte, said Sgt. Elmer Rayandayan, 45, died of gunshot wounds in the chest.

He was brought to the Ormoc Sugar Planters Association (Ospa) Hospital here but doctors declared him dead on arrival.

According to Santos, Rayandayan's wife had just delivered a baby girl, the couple's ninth child.

Wounded was Sgt. Teodoro Lomocso, who was hit in the left of his body. He was brought to Ospa Hospital for treatment.

"I bleed for my soldiers because they were on a humanitarian mission," Santos told the INQUIRER.

He said Rayandayan and Lomocso went to Barangay Sherwoodon to negotiate the surrender of the two rebels who were wounded in the encounter in Barangay Mahayag, Ormoc last March 13.

While the two were talking to the rebels' relatives, Santos said they were fired upon by five members of the New People's Army (NPA) belonging to the Wendel Dulinog Command of the Leyte Front.

Rayandayan was able to fire back and hit two of the rebels, said Santos. The two, however, were able to escape.

He said the relatives were facilitating the surrender of the wounded rebels so that they would be given medical treatment.

"We learned that the NPA were resenting the surrender efforts of their relatives," said Santos.

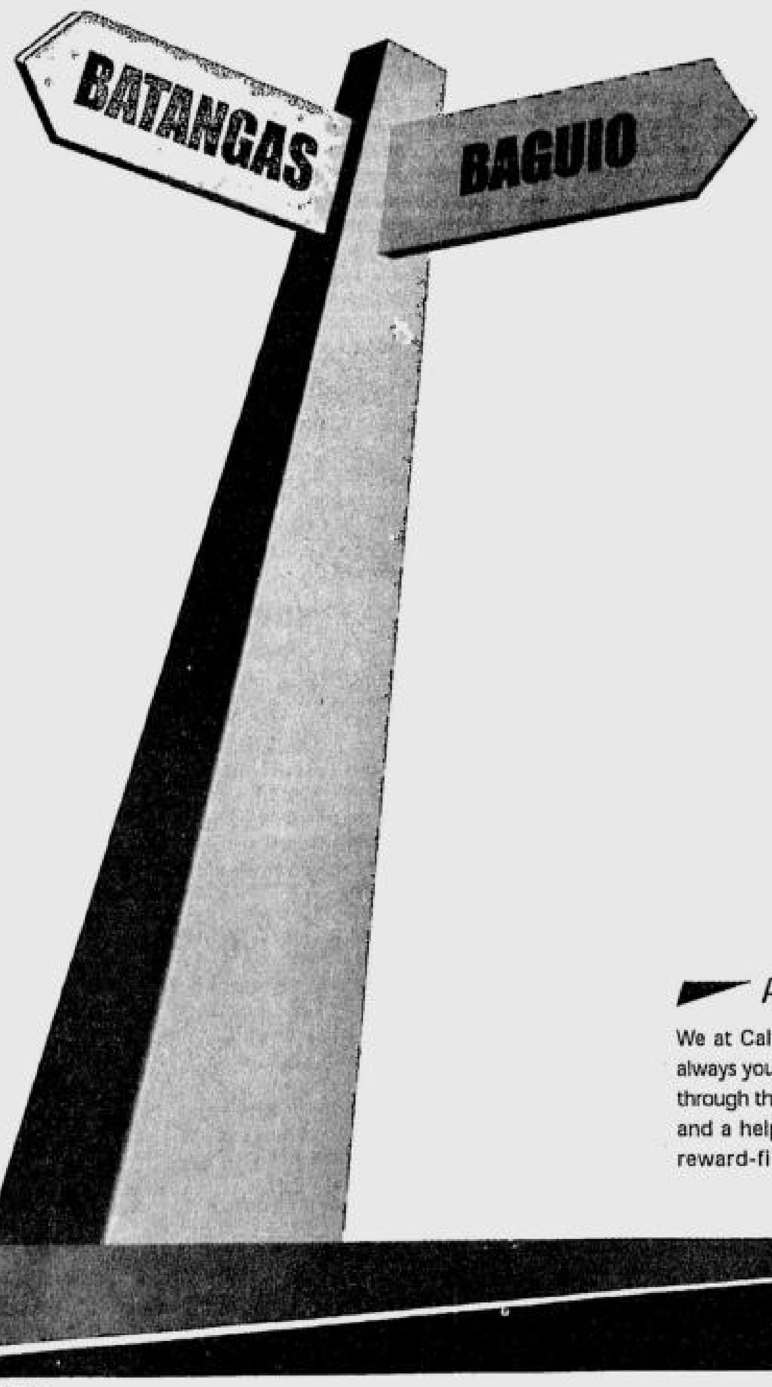
An Army Scout Ranger was killed in an encounter with about 30-armed rebels on March 13 when soldiers tried to overcome a major rebel encampment in Barangay Mayahag this city.

Killed in the encounter was Cpl. Benjamin Creer, 29, a son of a policeman.

Santos said four women, including a 14-year-old girl, two children and two adults, were rounded up in the alleged rebel camp after the encounter.

The soldiers also found two major tunnels suspected to be production area for propaganda materials, which they found to be of "high intelligence value."

What Drives You



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Staying Whole During Holy Week

As you and your family set off for your yearly excursion during the Semana Santa, here are some tips to keep yourselves safe and secure on the road.

Make a List. Check it twice.
No, it's not Christmas, but it pays to be meticulous in planning your journey. Jot down everything you need for your trip, and tick off things as you get them together. It's very easy to miss or forget something as small as bandages or even underwear when crunch time comes. In any case, you can always pick up essentials like toiletries, medicine, sun block, food and refreshments at Star Mart outlets in Caltex Stations on the way.

Tune up the Family Car.
Make sure beforehand that the vehicle is in tip-top shape. Go to your nearest Caltex Station and avail of the car check from Toyota and Isuzu. Make sure the oil's been changed, the tank full and a spare tire's in the trunk. And have the DVDs you want ready for those with players in their rides.

Do it before you go.
And of course, try to go to the bathroom as much as possible before you hit the road. Getting hit by the call of nature on a lonely stretch of road is pretty inconvenient, but hey-good restrooms are just a Caltex Station away.

With all your preparations ready, all that's left is to say a prayer. You've done your best, so let God do the rest. May you all have a peaceful and safe Lenten Season, from Caltex.

Graduates of PMA urged to help in recruitment

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

FORT DEL PILAR, Baguio City—Cadet First Class Marjorie Mukay, Kalinga's first woman to make it to the top 10 graduating cadets of the Philippine Military Academy, has not volunteered for a tour of duty in Mindanao, unlike some of her classmates.

But that's because her first duty is to speak before the graduating class of her old hometown high school in Tabuk, like the rest of PMA's Sanlingan Class of 2005, whose members graduated March 12. Mukay is 10th among the 149 graduating members of the class.

Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz Jr. asked the PMA corps of cadets and its graduating class to begin recruiting fresh blood to the institution by giving testimony about its good points before other graduation ceremonies in their hometowns.

"The public should know the positive side of PMA, so I suggested to (Lt. Gen. Cristolito Balaoing, PMA superintendent) to send the graduating cadets and other senior cadets to other graduation ceremonies," Cruz told reporters in a press conference here last week.

Sharing

Cruz led the ceremonial turnover of command from the graduating cadets to the incoming senior cadets.

"After graduation, these new military officers will be on their holiday, so why not talk about their experiences in PMA to high school graduations?" he said.

Cruz said marketing PMA is part of his priorities under the Philippine defense program.

The academy has been beset by scandals involving PMA alumni, but the cadets were most affected by the case of Army Lt. Rolly Joaquin, the valedictorian of PMA Maliyab Class of 2004, PMA officials said.

The United States Army Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia deported Joaquin over a shoplifting case last year when he undertook a special infantry course there.

Ray of hope

"Your presence here today reassures us, your parents and elders, that in the gathering clouds of despair, there is a bright ray of hope that radiates from our nation's youth. Each one of you has earned our respect," Cruz told the cadets during the ceremony at Borromeo Field.

Cruz said getting cadets to be invited to provincial graduation ceremonies can be part of a pending agreement with Education Secretary Florencio Abad about sourcing PMA recruits from the top students of high schools and universities.

Balaoing said selecting recruits could help PMA attract better candidates for military training.

BOHOL POISONING AFTERMATH

Groups revive campaign vs pesticides

DAVAO CITY—The food poisoning that killed 27 children in Bohol has given environmentalists a new reason to fight for a total pesticide ban in the country and to call for the abolition of the Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority (FPA).

Mindanao-based coalitions of environment groups dared Congress to act on the charter that created the FPA, and abolish it because of its failure to ensure people's safety from pesticides entering the country.

"What can kill insects can also kill humans," said Dr. Romy Quijano, a University of the Philippines toxicologist actively campaigning for a pesticide ban in Mindanao.

Common ingredient

Quijano's statement came after the health department concluded that the 27 children who died in Bohol early this month had eaten food laced with chemical compound carbamate, a common ingredient of agricultural and household pesticides.

"If FPA cannot do its job of ensuring people's safety from pesticides, there is no reason why it continues to exist," according to Dr. Rex Linao, co-convenor of the environment group Panaghoy sa Kinaiyahan-Coalition for Mother Earth.

Linao had proposed that the FPA be dissolved and the savings the government will get as a result be used to compensate victims of pesticide poisoning in the country each year.

Fatal recess

Twenty-seven schoolchildren died and scores of others were hospitalized from a rural village in the central island of Bohol on March 9 after eating caramelized cassava during recess, a disaster that the health department had blamed for careless food preparation.

Quijano had repeatedly warned people against the hazardous effects of pesticides. He said nobody is safe from pesticides, which until now are still being used by big banana plantations in Mindanao.

"They're like bombs, designed to kill," said Linao.

Earlier, Quijano said over 30 chemical pesticides, already banned from the Europe and the United States, where they originated, are still being used by banana plantations in the Philippines.

Linao said only a few doctors in the country are trained to diagnose pesticide poisoning and most of the cases happening in big banana plantations in Mindanao remain unreported.

Each year, over 220,000 people die of pesticide poisoning, mostly in poor countries, where over 25 million are poisoned by banned pesticides, according to the World Health Organization and the United Nations for Environment Protection (UNEP).

Earlier, National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) Director Reynaldo Wycoco had confirmed that pesticide, not cyanide naturally found in cassava, killed the children. *Germelina Lacorte, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

FOCUS OF ATTENTION

REUTERS

Girls watch a soldier as he guards the war-torn town of Panamao, Sulu. The government has placed its armed forces on full alert to guard against suspected plots by terrorists to bomb churches and shopping malls during the Holy Week holidays.

ROUNDUP

3 drown in big wave in Davao

DAVAO CITY—Three young persons drowned while another went missing after a big wave hit them while they were swimming in a beach in Sta. Maria town in Davao del Sur on Saturday morning. Four other persons survived the incident. Survivors said they were swimming in a beach in Sitio Babak, Barangay Kilusad, when big waves suddenly struck and dragged them to the deeper portion of the sea. *Anthony Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

PDI foto chief's mom robbed

URDANETA CITY—Three men armed with a handgun robbed the mother of INQUIRER chief photographer Ernie Sarmiento in Barangay Nancayasan here on March 18. Police said Minda Sarmiento, 73, a retired teacher, had just withdrawn P70,000 from the Land Bank of the Philippines branch in Nancayasan when three men in a motorcycle blocked the jeepney she was riding in along MacArthur Highway here. Two suspects alighted from the motorcycle and, at gunpoint, took Sarmiento's handbag containing the money, a wallet and a bankbook. Police said the suspects singled out Sarmiento as the money and belongings of other passengers were not taken. *Eric Montoya, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Body formed on Halcon climbs

CITY OF CALAPAN—The Oriental Mindoro Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (Penro) issued on March 17 a special order that created the provincial task force to regulate and monitor the impact of visits on Mt. Halcon in Baco, Oriental Mindoro. The move came amid a recommendation for a moratorium on Mt. Halcon climbs. The mountain is the third highest peak in the country and yearly visited by mountaineers from all over the country. The task force is composed of representatives from the Penro, immediate barangays of Lantuyan and Mayabig, Baco tourism council, provincial tourism office, provincial information office, National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, Halcon Mountaineers Association Inc. and the academe. *Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

New Mindoro Penro appointed

CITY OF CALAPAN—Ronilo Salac, Socorro town community environment and natural resources officer (Cenro), took the place of Teodulo Ragudo, who died of a heart attack on March 9, as the officer-in-charge of the Occidental Mindoro Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office. While still the Socorro Cenro chief, Salac, with police and military authorities, arrested a businessman on March 4 for hunting around 30 migratory ducks in Naujan Lake National Park, Barangay Pasi, Socorro, Oriental Mindoro. Engineer Alex Jacob, from the National Capitol Region, took the place of Salac, according to Amor Asi, Penro information officer. *Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

More scholars for Mindoro

CITY OF CALAPAN—Oriental Mindoro Gov. Arnan Panaligan said the provincial government will have three more scholars, from the previous two, per town and city and two from each Mangyan tribe. The program is supported by an ordinance passed by the Sangguniang Panlalawigan. The assistance includes P8,000 for tuition per semester, P1,000 in book allowances and P1,000 in monthly allowances. *Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Return of mining in village opposed

BULALACAO, Oriental Mindoro—Community leader Girlie Dayanghirang, whose family donated a piece of property in Barangay Cambunang here for the housing project of the multi-sectoral volunteer group Gawad Kalinga, said village residents would not allow the resumption of mining activities of the F. F. Cruz mining company in the area. This is so, she said, especially because the housing project of Gawad Kalinga in the village, which has Mangyans as beneficiaries, has already started. F. F. Cruz, a Manila-based contractor, explored for coal mining in the early '90s but residents, supported by concerned groups from other towns, objected after they realized the mining's negative effects on the environment and that many workers to be employed by the company would come from Manila. *Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Soul power in Tagaytay retreat

THE CENTER for Spiritual Learning (CSL) in Tagaytay City will hold a live-in retreat for the public from Thursday to Saturday. The retreat, dubbed "Soul Power Experience" and conducted by the Brahma Kumaris, will help participants through meditation to explore their soul power and discover what drains their energy and what will restore it. CSL is located at 1020 Magallanes Drive, across Starbucks. For details, call Sister Leela at (046) 860-2257. For the city-bound, Brahma Kumaris offers two-day retreats—Thursday and Friday—at 7484 Bagtikan Street, San Antonio Village, Makati City; and 34 T. Gener Quezon City. Call 890-7960 for Makati, and 922-9231 for Quezon City. Meditation is a practical method to re-charge one's spiritual battery.

Drought not major concern of farmers in N. Ecija

CABANATUAN CITY—For the first time, farmers in Nueva Ecija are not worried about the drought accompanying the El Niño weather phenomenon this year.

Antonio Nangel, operations manager of the Upper Pampanga River Integrated Irrigation Systems (UPRIIS), said this confidence stemmed from the high water level recorded at the Pantabangan Dam, their main irrigation water source.

Nangel said water level at the reservoir of Pantabangan is at least 207 meters and this can sustain the current and succeeding rice cropping seasons.

He said at least 80,000 hectares of farmlands in Nueva Ecija would be scheduled for irrigation.

"This level is very high compared to the past years' records at this time of the year," he said.

The dam's water level could hardly breach the 195-meter mark in the past years, Nangel said.

Records showed that in the 1998 El Niño phenomenon, the water level in Pantabangan dropped to 173.54 meters.

That year, only about 45,000 hectares in Nueva Ecija were cultivated for the regular rice cropping season.

The worst year for Nueva Ecija farmers was 1983 when no irrigation water could be released from the dam.

Due to the low water level, the old Pantabangan town site, which was submerged in 1973 when the dam started operations, reappeared.

Nangel said the rains brought by successive typhoons in December last year contributed to the increase in the water volume. *Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Marine experts worry over decline in Ilocos eel population

By Marlon Ramos
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LOS BAÑOS, Laguna—Researchers of a marine and aquatic institution based here yesterday raised concern over the continued depletion of eel in the Ilocos region.

Dr. Rafael Guerrero, executive director of the Philippine Council for Aquatic and Marine Research and Development (PCAMRD), said a recent study done by researchers from the University of Northern Philippines in Vigan City showed the steady decline of eel population along the Abra River.

The study, done by Alma Segismundo and Petronila Florendo, covered 13 municipalities which included nine towns along the upper Abra River, the main habitat of eels, and four at the river's lower boundary.

A total of 256 fishermen took part in the research held from April to December last year.

Peak catch

Guerrero said most of the fishermen in the upper portion of the river were able to catch an average of one-fourth kilo of eel per outing during the peak months of May to June.

"The average catch sold is only two kilos per week during the peak months, which means that the resource is declining. Some years back, the local fishermen along the Abra River had benefited from the abundance of eel," he said in a statement e-mailed to the INQUIRER.

He said five years ago, fishermen in the area were able to haul almost two kilos of eel during the same period.

He said a kilo of eel can be sold for as high as P350.

"But it seldom reaches the market and only a few can afford to buy and enjoy its exotic taste," Guerrero added.

Factors

He said the decrease in eel population could be attributed to the rampant practice of electric fishing, indiscriminate fishing and increase in the number of fishermen along the Abra River.

He said the depletion of eel could have a negative impact on the livelihood of people in the area who depend on fishing as a major source of livelihood.

To stop what he said was the alarming decline of eels in the region, the researchers recommended the stern implementation of policies and ordinances to protect Abra River's natural resources.

Guerrero said they had also informed authorities about the importance of educating fishermen on the consequences of illegal fishing practices.

He said they would also launch an information campaign that would help boost the eel population in the river.

Popular food

Eel (Anguilla spp.) is a very popular fish in Ilocos and considered an exotic food among countries in the Asia Pacific region, including the Philippines.

A freshwater fish usually found in rivers and river tributaries, eel has a life span of 8-15 years, which it spends in rivers.

It usually migrates to the deep sea to breed and eventually die.

METRO

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Text us your feedback: Inquirer met name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart) *Editor* **Ester G. Dipasupil** ■ *Assistant Editor* **Cenon B. Bibe Jr.**

Metro Manila security assured for Holy Week

SOLDIERS and police will patrol malls, churches and other crowded places, especially in Metro Manila, this week to thwart reported bombing plots by Muslim militants during the Easter holiday, officials said yesterday.

The tight security measures were put in place after national police chief Director General Arturo Lomibao announced Friday that four to five members of the al-Qaida-linked Abu Sayyaf group and an operative from the allied regional terror network Jemaah Islamiyah were in Metro Manila to carry out bombings.

The Abu Sayyaf has threatened to avenge the deaths of 23 inmates who were killed when police stormed a prison facility in Camp Bagong Diwa, Taguig City, last week to quell a botched jailbreak.

Armed coast guard sailors took their boats to Manila Bay, and police with bomb-sniffing dogs searched passengers' luggage. Sea marshals were deployed on ferries, the most popular means of transport this holiday season, when hundreds of thousands of Filipinos travel to their home provinces and holiday resorts.

The four-day Easter holiday begins Thursday, but government workers—except for the military, police and emergency personnel—will start leaving offices as early as Wednesday.

An augmentation force from the Philippine Marines and the Philippine National Police (PNP) will provide additional security at the airport aerodrome starting tomorrow, a ranking airport official said yesterday.

Some 30 members of the Marines and patrol mobiles from the Southern Police District will help the airport security group in watching over the airport terminals and other airport areas during the Holy Week, according to retired Brig. Gen. Angel Atutubo, Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA) assistant general manager for security and emergency services.

The MIAA aerodrome includes the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA), the Centennial Terminal, the NAIA 3, the Manila Domestic Airport, the general aviation area, and other areas under the jurisdiction of the airport authority.

Additional troops

Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Efren Abu, on the other hand, placed the National Capital Region Command (NCRCom) on red alert for the duration of the Holy Week. Abu has ordered all military units within Metro Manila to keep their contingency forces ready for possible linkups with the NCRCom forces. He also left it to the discretion of other commanders to declare their own alert status depending on the situation in their respective areas..

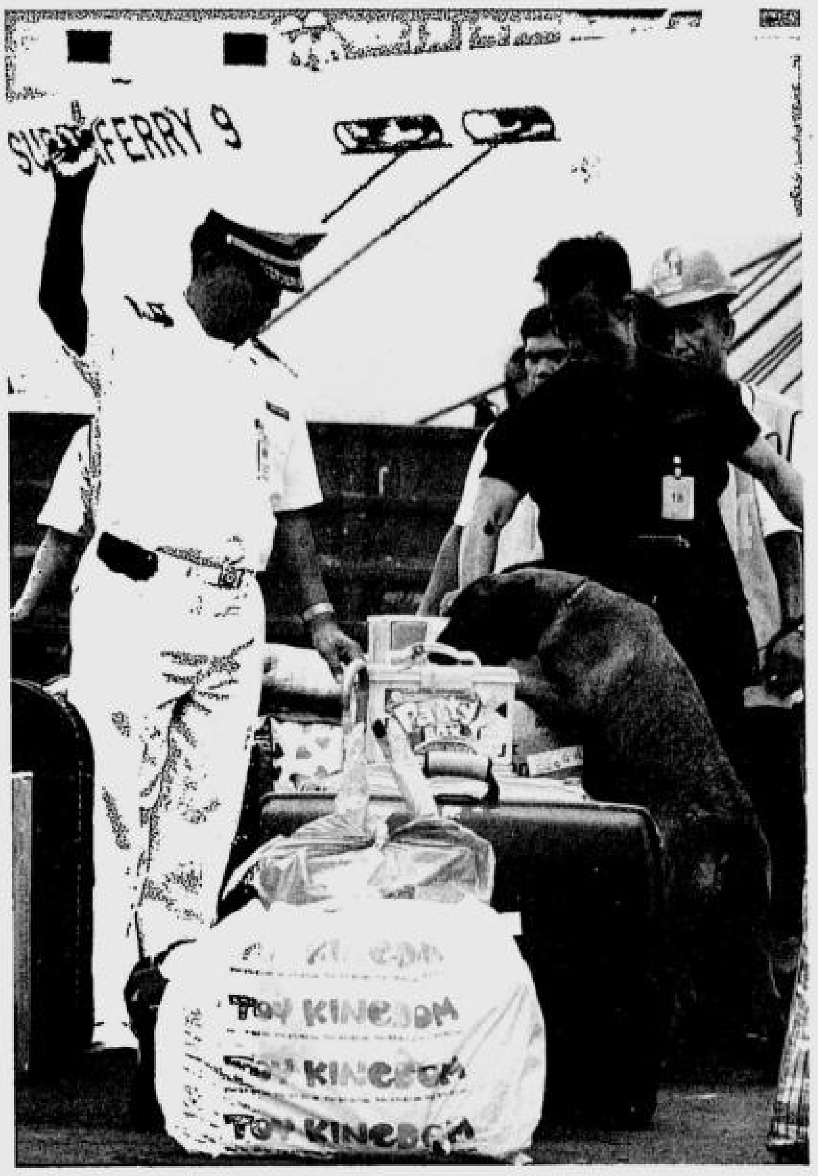
"I would not say this is very serious but this is a real threat because this has been done in the past," he said at the Philippine Army's 108th anniversary rites yesterday.

The Department of the Interior and Local Government, on the other hand, would be fielding medical teams and ambulance units in the country's major thoroughfares. Teams from the Bureau of Fire Protection will be strategically positioned in the national highways that are expected to be busy as Metro Manilans head to the provinces for the Easter break.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, however, cautioned authorities against routinely tagging Muslim communities in Metro Manila as havens of suspected terrorists, saying this would only fan perceptions of a "religious war." While real, threats by the Abu Sayyaf to bomb churches during the Holy Week were aimed at inflaming religious passions and raising the specter of a fresh "Muslim-Christian" conflict, he added.

Leaders from the Interfaith Action for Social Change, meanwhile, converged yesterday in front of the gates of Camp Bagong Diwa for a prayer ceremony.

The group included the wife of Gov. Mujiv Hataman, Sitti Djalia Hataman, who represented the Anak Mindanao party-list; Tomomi Oida of the Shinji Shumei Kai; Rabbi Eliyahu Azarias of the Jewish Association; Aleem Fatani Abdul Malik of the Greenhills mussalah; and Shakuntala Vaswani, representing the Hindu community. *AP, Nikko Dizon, Dona Pazzibugan, Norman Bordadora, TJ Burgonio, Jocelyn Uy*



A DOG sniffs for bombs and other explosives inside a busy terminal at Manila's North Harbor as Metro Manilans begin their exodus to the provinces for the Holy Week. AP

Park may soon live only on canvases

By Tina G. Santos

APART from birds and other wild life that have found refuge in Arroceros Park in Manila, environmentalists have another reason for wanting to protect the park.

Several professional artists have been drawing inspiration from the lush landscape. Every weekend they visit the park to paint its century-old trees, the Pasig River and visitors.

"The artists come here for inspiration... It is their quiet (protest) against (the) turning (of) everything into concrete. They have also been fighting for the conservation of nature," said Regina Paterno, president of Winner Foundation, an environmental organization that has been taking care of the forest park.

"We want to provide a lung for the city and, at the same time, educate schoolchildren about nature and how they should respect God's creations," she said.

Some of the artists who were at the park last Sunday said the site was not only ideal but also accessible to fine arts students. "Students and professional artists come here to share ideas. We display our paintings to attract tourists to the beauty of the park. We want to help the foundation by showing the beauty of the forest, to save it for generations to come," one artist said.

The foundation has been at loggerheads with Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, who gave the go-signal recently for the building of a teacher's center at the site.

Last week, the city engineering department delivered truckloads of lumber and other construction materials for what would be the headquarters of the city school division.

With the blessing of the city government, the school board is set to build offices for the Division of City Schools, the local arm of the education department. The division is currently holding offices at the fourth floor of the Manila City Hall. The city government bought the property from the Land Bank of the Philippines for P65 million.

Board of judges upholds new Collegian editor in chief's win

By Alcuin Papa

THE BOARD of judges of this year's editorial examinations for the next editor in chief of the Philippine Collegian, the official student publication of the University of the Philippines in Diliman, has virtually quashed a protest filed by other contenders for the post who had questioned the results of the tests.

In a letter dated March 11, the board, headed by Prof. Georgina Encanto, responded to a letter filed by three of the losing examinees, and upheld the victory of first-placer Juan Pablo Colet.

The three examinees, Katrina Macapagal, John Paul Corpus, and Wendell Gumban sent a letter earlier to the board saying Colet had not followed the instructions required for the test. They also alleged that Colet and student judge Francis Alvin Asilo were both members of the Upsilon Sigma Phi fraternity. Another student judge, Tara Ann Vea, was reportedly the girlfriend of another Upsilon member.

Encanto and the other judges ruled that it was not only Colet but also several other examinees who failed to follow the instructions of the judges, making the judges decide to relax this rule.

On the relationship between Colet and the two student judges, the panel "deemed it (the relationship) immaterial and irrelevant to the conduct of the examinations. Mere association between two persons is not a sufficient basis for alleging bias on the part of the judges."

The panel added that the alleged disparity in the scores of the examinees "was more apparent than real."

"The Board unanimously selected Juan Paolo Colet by giving him the highest aggregate score in the examination. A careful re-evaluation of the scores reveals that all the judges, except one, consistently ranked Mr. Colet the top examinee in both editorial and laying out exams; that Mr. Colet in fact, did not rank first in the news writing exam; and that there exists no pattern to suggest any form of bias by any one of the judges," the panel said.

But Macapagal, in a phone interview, said they would file another protest in response to the judges' decision, saying the judges disregarded the issue of the affiliation between Colet and the other judges.

In a separate interview, Colet said he had already received his appointment as the next editor from the UP Diliman Chancellor's office. "The judges had already resolved the issue. We are now busy putting together the staff in time for the first issue next school year," he said.

The Collegian has a weekly circulation of at least 15,000 issues. It traces its activist roots to the martial law years. Past editors in chief had gone on to public service, politics, journalism, and the private sector. In the past, the editorial examinations had been hotly contested by different student groups.

2 car theft syndicate members fall

By Nancy C. Carvajal

TWO alleged members of a notorious car theft syndicate operating in the northern part of Metro Manila were arrested at their hideout in Malabon City yesterday after they were identified by one of their victims.

Police said an Indian national, Krishnan Kewal, told them that he had been a victim of the syndicate during a robbery incident in Valenzuela City last March 5.

"The two are allegedly members of the Sigue-Sigue Sputnik gang and of the notorious 'Nognog Group,'" said Police Supt. Sotero Ramos, Northern Police District Intelligence Unit chief. He identified the suspects as Christopher Orillaza, alias Onyx, 30 , and Marlon Caneso, alias Jojo Bungal, also 30.

Ramos said the two were arrested inside their hideout at Block 3, Lot 122, Pampano St., Longos, Malabon City.

"The suspects had been under surveillance since the capture of their leader, and were supposedly raising funds to pay his bail bond," he added.

The group's alleged leader, Ruel Cadona, also known as "Nognog," along with two other associates, are now in jail and need more than half a million pesos to bail them out.

Ramos said the group operated in the Caloocan, Malabon, Navotas and Valenzuela (CAMANAVA) area before their capture in Aug. 21, 2004.

Police found a motorcycle owned by Kewal in their hideout, apart from another stolen vehicle used by the duo reportedly as their getaway car.

Robbery and car theft charges had been filed against the pair. The suspects said they were victims of a frame up, but admitted that they were involved in previous robbery and hold-up cases.

IS teachers press demand for back wages

By Alcuin Papa

FILIPINO teachers at the International School Manila (ISM) are pressing their demand for payment of around $7 million in back wages.

In a press conference in Manila yesterday, Raquel David-Ching, president of the International School Alliance of Educators (ISAE), said they "continue to be denied full justice" despite a 2000 Supreme Court decision in their favor.

Ching and the teachers' lawyer, Sandra Coronel, said it was high time the school paid the back wages of 178 teachers, some of them already retired, since 1995 amounting to $7.3 million. "I think they owe it to us as teachers and they owe it to the country because this is what the Supreme Court ruled. They have a moral obligation to implement the Supreme Court's ruling," Ching said.

Filipino IS teachers had claimed their foreign counterparts were paid 30-40 percent more in wages. In a decision in 2000, the High Court, finding "inequality and discrimination" in the school, ruled that local and foreign teachers should get equal pay. The high court said the affected local teachers should get back salaries from 1995. But the 2001 motion before the labor department for implementation of the SC decision was opposed by the school. IS alleged that neither the retroactivity nor immediate execution of equal salaries was provided for in the SC's decision.

Suspects in UP stude's slay nabbed

By DJ Yap

THE KILLING of a University of the Philippines Diliman student inside the campus is a solved case, according to Central Police District director Nicasio Radovan Jr.

All three suspected killers and robbers of Merwin Mendoza, 21, have been caught and are now under police custody, he said.

Geology student Mendoza was stabbed dead after he fought off three suspects who tried to rob his girlfriend, Kellsye Fabian.

The two were walking in front of Palma Hall at about 9:35 p.m. on Thursday when suspects Rodolfo Balais, 17, Jerico Conde, 17, and Mark Aspiras, 15, declared a holdup. The suspects then stabbed Mendoza in the chest. The victim was rushed to the UP Infirmary where he later died .

In a statement to the INQUIRER, UP Diliman Chancellor Sergio S. Cao said he condemned the killing. "This recent transgression took the life of a promising young person; worse, it is an assault on the sanctity of the University as an institution of higher learning. We will not tolerate petty criminals preying upon our constituents, terrorizing the community, and yet taking another life," he said.

We're the richest city, not QC, says Makati

By Tarra V. Quismundo

MAKATI disputed yesterday Quezon City's claim to being Metro Manila's richest local government.

The finance department of Metro Manila's business hub had documents showing that Makati earned almost a million pesos more than Quezon City from local sources last year.

"The reason why they (QC) are saying they are the richest (is) because they got more IRA (Internal Revenue Allotment) than us... They might have gotten more, but in terms of collection, we were the highest," said Ruth Yamane-Garcia, the finance consultant hired by Makati's mayor.

Data from the Bureau of Local Government Finance (BLGF) of the Department of Finance indicated that Makati earned a total of P4.41 billion in business and real property taxes, and other fees last year. Quezon City, meanwhile, collected P4.322 billion, about P900,000 less.

Makati's income came mainly from business taxes, which, at P2.48 billion, accounted for more than half of the city's total earnings.

Real property taxes, last adjusted in 2001, earned the city P1.4 billion. Clearly, said Garcia, Makati earned more through its own sources than its bigger (inland area) Metro Manila neighbor.

A week ago, Quezon City treasurer Victor Endriga said the city topped all of Metro Manila's local governments in terms of earnings last year with P5.8 billion, beating Makati by more than P1 billion.

Makati's Information and Community Relations Department wrote Endriga yesterday with its clarification. Attached in the letter were BLGF records and a comparison of the 2004 earnings of the two cities.

"Their IRA was P1.4 billion. Ours was just P400 million... They got a billion more than us," said Garcia, referring to money allotted by the national government to cities and municipalities annually.

Quezon City received a higher IRA because it was bigger and more populated, according to Garcia.

The IRA from the national government was determined on the basis of a city or municipality's land area and population.

Easter is a very special day
for me and my sisters.

Every year we'd drive back home,
to the lake where we learned how [illegible]

We called ourselves the Mango Tree [illegible]
in honor of the big tree by the banks.
We'd jump in the lake and yell, "Green Mango One!
Yellow Mango Two! Red Mango Three!" But you,
being the *panganay*, always wanted to be different,
so you'd shout, "Karabao Mango!"

Easter just hasn't been the same
since you moved to Canada.

So, this Sunday, we'll take turns calling you up
with our Globe to greet you, "Karabao Mango!"
and a happy Easter.

Send your love this Easter with

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Globe connects more people to their loved ones abroad so they never miss a moment.

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Globe International Text: send text abroad for only P10 per message on G-Plan.
P15 per message on Globe Prepaid.
To text, send message to (+)(country code)(mobile number)

Globe International MMS: send MMS to more countries.
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Editor **Teddyvic S. Melendres**

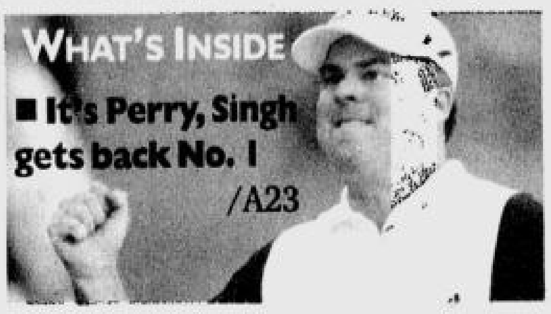
SPORTS TV

Compiled by L. Mangulat

GOLF: LPGA Safeway International; 6 p.m.; ESPN—See J-Ro start off her quest for another LPGA title.
Asian Tour-TCL Classic; 10 a.m. (r); STAR Sports—The Asian Tour continues in China.
BASKETBALL: NBA – Magic vs Bobcats; 8 a.m. (r-9 p.m.); Solar Sports—Orlando and Charlotte tangle in the east.
US NCAA Tournament; 10 a.m. (r-8 p.m.); Sports Plus—It's down to the final 32.
TENNIS: ATP Pacific Life Open Highlights; 9:30 p.m.; STAR Sports—Check out the best moments from Indian Wells.
·Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

■ James' 56 points can't rescue Cavs /A23

■ Athletes welcome PhilSports home /A22



WHAT'S INSIDE

■ It's Perry, Singh gets back No. 1 /A23

■ Epson Cup 2 leveling meet ends today /A23

Pacquiao manager sees rematch in September

Plastic surgery for RP hero

By Salven L. Lagumbay, *Contributor*

MANNY Pacquiao's new manager, Shelly Finkel, is not about to sulk in the corner and start finger-pointing, a day after the Filipino ring hero lost by unanimous decision to Mexican Erik Morales. Finkel has started laying the groundwork for Pacquiao's next career move.

The well-respected boxing manager yesterday informed members of the boxing media that he and Top Rank president Bob Arum, who also promotes Morales' fights, will soon sit down to draw up a grudge rematch between Pacquiao and the Mexican star.

Arum expressed satisfaction at the outcome of the fight Sunday, praising both Pacquiao and Morales for putting on a classic fight to the delight of the 14,326 fans at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas, Nevada.

According to an industry source, Finkel is looking at a Pacquiao-Morales rematch "sometime in September."

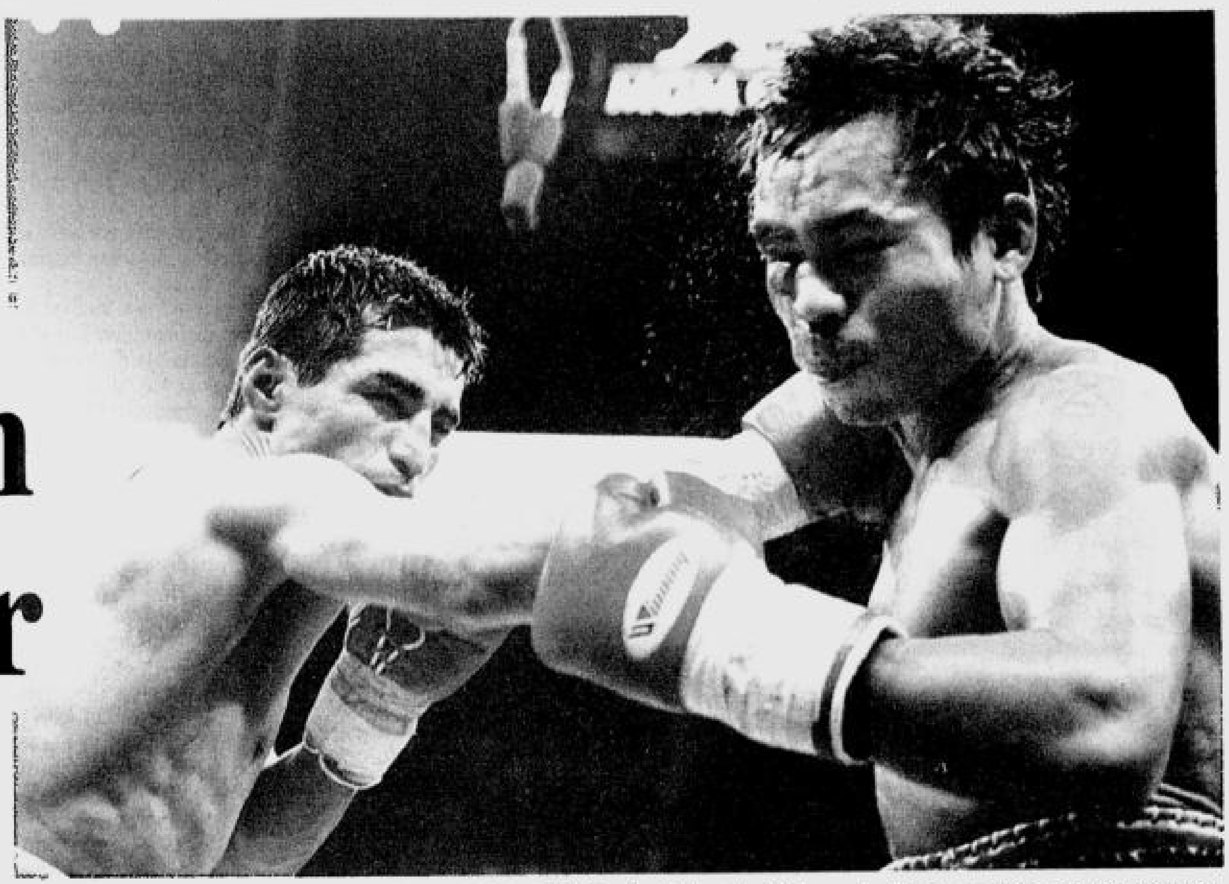
The same source said Finkel is also considering letting Pacquiao fight another foe "in summer" in the East Coast, where a big chunk of the Filipino diaspora is concentrated.

Meanwhile, doctors have suggested that Pacquiao undergo a corrective plastic surgery to close the deep cut he sustained following the accidental headbutt by Morales in the fifth round of their 12-round fight Saturday.

Pacquiao virtually fought with one eye in the second half of the fight with blood oozing from the cut hampering his vision and affecting his defenses.

Reports coming out of Las Vegas said a team of doctors will re-examine the Filipino fighter's cut above the right eye to find out if the wound was properly stitched.

After resting the whole morning yesterday, Pacquiao joined Finkel for a brunch at one of the restaurants at the MGM Grand Hotel.



MANNY Pacquiao (right) reels from a right straight by Erik Morales during the 12th round of their super featherweight fight at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas, Nevada, Saturday. A rematch is tipped in September. REUTERS

Ring Magazine: Manny still king

By Salven L. Lagumbay, *Contributor*

FILIPINO ring hero Manny Pacquiao will remain as the world's No. 1 featherweight despite his loss last Sunday to Erik Morales in their monumental 12-round fight at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Ring Magazine, the world's leading authority in ranking boxers, is retaining Pacquiao as its best featherweight because he fought Morales in the heavier 130-lb super-featherweight class, according to editor Nigel Collins.

Pacquiao's continued reign as people's champion at 126 lb may not be for long, though, as the Filipino warrior has expressed his interest in continuing his quest for recognition in the 130-lb division.

"I like this weight and I'm going to stay at this weight," Pacquiao told boxing reporters after the classic fight Saturday.

Pacquiao's decision to remain as a super-featherweight will most likely earn him another crack at Morales, who earlier announced he's willing to take on anyone lined up for him by his promoter, Top Rank, and manager Fernando Beltran.

Top Rank boss Bob Arum sounded upbeat on the prospect of a Morales-Pacquiao rematch while downplaying suggestions of a fourth showdown between his ward and Barrera.

International boxing insiders say Arum apparently no longer wants to deal with his former ward, Oscar De La Hoya, with whom he has a falling out months ago. De La Hoya promotes Barrera.

"Either way, because of his gallant stand against Morales, Pacquiao's marketability in high-profile fights has not diminished one bit," said a source in Las Vegas. "The handlers of Both Barrera and Morales are definitely salivating over the [prospects of a rematch with] Filipino boy."

Meanwhile, Filipino Z "The Dream" Gorres, who made an auspicious debut in Las Vegas with a first-round demolition of Fil-Am Glenn Donaire, is reportedly planning to stay in Los Angeles for several more weeks to continue training.

Tony Aldeguer, through promoter Sammy Gello-ani, said yesterday they haven't lined up another engagement for Gorres.

Pocket tilt for RP five in peril: Russia lone confirmed entry

By June Navarro

THE POCKET tournament being planned to gauge the strength of the national men's basketball team may yet end up as just a showcase of skills between two nations.

Teams from Japan, Iran, Qatar and South Korea—four of the Philippines' toughest rivals on the Asian scene—have all begged off from the tournament slated to start on Easter Sunday.

Only Russia has confirmed participation, forcing the organizing Philippine Basketball Association and the Basketball Association of the Philippines to shelve the tourney.

The pocket tournament, also designed to build the cohesion of the newly formed RP squad, has been moved instead to April 17-19.

The RP team is composed mainly of PBA stars.

PBA operations chief Ricky Santos said the countries which declined the invitation are currently holding tournaments which will not wind up until mid-April at the earliest.

Santos, however, said the main pocket caging will push through in April, even if only the Russians could come.

Meanwhile, the PBA yesterday canceled its games on Easter Sunday after learning that some key players have booked flights to spend the Holy Week break overseas.

"*Ang alam kasi nila, isang linggong walang laro* (These players thought there would be no games for a week) during the Holy Week," said Santos. "*Marami sa mga* Fil-Ams *ang nakapagpa*-book *na ng mga* flights for the US (Many of these players have already booked flights for the US."

Santos said most of the players, who also belong to the 21-man national pool, are from Alaska, San Miguel Beer, Talk 'N Text, Coca-Cola and Shell.

"Their expected absence from the games was a big factor, that's why we decided to shelve the games on Easter Sunday," he said.

The PBA originally scheduled matches pitting Alaska against Red Bull Barako and Ginebra versus Talk 'N Text on Sunday.

In-form Reyes tops Japan Open

BATA Reyes pockets about P773,000.

EFREN "Bata" Reyes beat compatriot Rodolfo "Boy Samson" Luat, 9-5, Sunday to win the 18th Japan Open and the top purse of 1,500,000 yen (about P773,000) at the New Pier Hall Kaigan in Tokyo, Japan.

The 50-year-old Reyes trounced Japan's Masaki Tanaka while Luat downed another Japanese, Hidenobu Takanami, in the semifinals to arrange the all-Filipino title clash.

In so doing, Luat avenged another Filipino, former world No. 1 Francisco "Django" Bustamante, who was beaten by Takanami in the last 64. Tanaka, on the other hand, ousted ex-world champion Chao Fong-pang of Chinese-Taipei in the last 128.

The win boosted Reyes' hold of the No. 1 spot in the 2005 Player Money List with total earnings of $46,919.00.

At second place is former US Open winner Corey Deuel who has won US$23,482.00. Reigning world pool champion Alex "The Lion" Pagulayan is in third place ($23,324.00), while Bustamante is in fourth ($22,272.00).

According to Ish Caparas of Puyat Sports, other notable participants in the Japan Open were Mika Immonen of Finland and Ralf Souquet of Germany. The Filipino brigade included Antono Gabica, Ramil Gallego, Antonio Lining, Warren Kiamco, Dennis Orcollo, Roel Esquillo and Dondon Razalan.

Billiard and Snooker Congress of the Philippines president Ernesto Fajardo said the Reyes-Luat finals proved once again that Filipinos stand a good chance of sweeping the gold medals in billiards in the 2005 Manila Southeast Asian Games.

Marlon Bernardino, Contributor

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Athletes welcome PhilSports home

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE COUNTRY'S bets in the Southeast Asian Games this November will have no regrets leaving their dilapidated quarters at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex.

Former track superstar Lydia de Vega-Mercado, now the chief of athletes' advocates, yesterday said the athletes are taking their impending move to new quarters at the PhilSports complex "positively."

"I haven't heard (of) any complaints so far, unlike in previous decisions of the PSC (Philippine Sports Commission)," De Vega-Mercado told the INQUIRER. "*Maganda ang dating sa kanila* (they are taking the development positively)."

More than 300 athletes will be quartered in 30 newly-refurbished rooms at the PhilSports complex in Pasig.

DE VEGA-MERCADO

PSC officer-in-charge Butch Ramirez announced last weekend that the PhilSports will soon become the "RP Olympic Village." The facility will have air-conditioning units and a first-class cafeteria.

De Vega-Mercado praised the PSC move and said she remains steadfast in her job to attend to the "athletes' concerns."

"I don't meddle in the athletes' gripes on their NSAs (national sports associations) because there is a forum for that," she said. "I only try to help them air their basic requests, and so far every concern has been addressed."

De Vega-Mercado's team is composed of former national women's basketball coach Bai Cristobal, Olympic boxing silver medalist Onyok Velasco and former national mentor Heidi Ong.

Estimo: I didn't say that

NATIONAL Chess Federation of the Philippines secretary general Sammy Estimo yesterday clarified he never said it was Rep. Matt Defensor and Grandmaster Eugene Torre "who must be held responsible" for the malversation charges recommended against him by the National Bureau of Investigation.

Estimo, a lawyer, pointed out that what he wrote in a letter to the INQUIRER Saturday was, "The original respondent in this case who received a subpoena from the NBI was Atty. Mat Defensor, who was then the president of the NCFP."

Estimo sent that letter in reaction to an INQUIRER article that appeared on the same day. It said the Philippine Sports Commission was ready to testify against him for his alleged malversation of PSC funds.

Estimo recalled that "it was Atty. Defensor and GM Eugene Torre who solicited the amount from the PSC to pay the plane fares of the 10 players who competed in the 2003 World Youth Chess Championship in Greece. For reasons known only to the PSC, it released the money as allowances of 11 athletes and 7 officials.

"The truth is there were only nine players who went to Greece accompanied by GM Torre. When the amount was released, GM Torre and I used the same to buy the plane tickets of the chessers. No allowances were requested in the letter of Atty. Defensor and GM Torre."

Estimo further explained that Defensor directed him to write "the PSC to realign the financial assistance to conform to the purpose for which it was solicited—that of plane fares and not allowances of the youth chessers.

"However, the former PSC officials failed to act on our request, thus putting us in the NCFP in a bind not of our own doing."

Six-man RP squad vying in Azerbaijan boxing meet

A SIX-MAN Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines (ABAP) squad left yesterday for Baku, Azerbaijan, to compete in the Dr. A. Chowdhry Cup 2005. The team, headed by former Mayor Ludovico Badoy and coached by Alexander Arroyo and Ronald Chavez, is composed of Lhyven Salazar, Franklin Albia, Joan Tipon, Junard Ladon, Anthony Marcial and Mark Jason Melligen. Accompanying the squad is referee-judge Teodoro Darcito. The team's participation in the event, slated March 22-28, was made possible through the support of the First Gentleman Foundation, Philippine Sports Commission and Pacific Heights. It is part of the ABAP's build-up for the Southeast Asian Games in November.

'Day of mourning'

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

WE LOST and that's it, we lost.

I mean we all lost, the entire nation lost, and that's why the nation is in a state of mourning. If the flag be put at half-mast all week, I would have no objection.

I say this because, just days before the fight, Rudy Salud, the former PBA commissioner, said: "If Manny Pacquiao would lose to Erik Morales—God forbid that wouldn't happen—it would be a day of mourning for all of us."

Sadly, it happened.

And if we now have black ribbons on our left chest, if not black armbands, so be it.

Until his defeat to Morales on Sunday, almost everybody felt Pacquiao looked invincible. Only maybe 1 out of 50 Filipinos on the average had bet on a Morales victory.

When Pacquiao lost, its immediate impact on almost every Filipino was of deathly grief, as though a member of the family had suddenly died.

It seemed like we were seeing the Ninoy Aquino assassination all over again. Tragic.

It seemed like Viernes Santo had been advanced five days, the debacle happening on a Palm Sunday under overcast skies.

It seemed like the world had stopped, the clock not a-ticking anymore.

Nobody's to blame for this. Not Pacquiao.

Pacquiao had given it his best shot. Simply put, his best was not enough.

Morales had given it his best shot. Simply put, his best was more than enough.

While we praise the gallantry of Pacquiao—he fought with only one good eye from middle of the fifth up to the final bell of the 12th round—we must also raise a glass to the ring savvy of Morales.

If it's any consolation, while Morales, 28, was the better fighter on Sunday over his foe two years his junior, Pacquiao emerged the courageous fighter between the two.

Boxers of a lesser stuff would have quit, if not coasted along, had they been put on the shoes of Pacquiao: In the last seven rounds of the 12-round bout, Pac Man was fighting burdened by a huge handicap. That gaping wound on his right eyebrow—whether caused by an accidental head butt or a right cross in the fifth round—had practically rendered Pacquiao blind on one eye.

After inflicting that injury, Morales had tattooed that wound relentlessly if only to pound Pacquiao into submission.

Other boxers would have collapsed from the sheer loss of blood virtually oozing from that one-inch cut like a faucet gone haywire.

But not Pacquiao.

Endowed with a deathless spirit and an unstoppable, unbreakable heart, Pacquiao plodded on, fought on like a warrior in the mold of Custer of the West: No surrender. OK, "No Fear" if you will.

Pacquiao's bravery did not go unnoticed.

In defeat, Pacquiao stood 10 feet tall not only to his 80 million countrymen but also to billions more around the world watching the fight on TV.

He was beaten all right, but the setback was not as humiliating as say, the first round knockout suffered by Sonny Liston at the hands of Cassius Clay (Muhammad Ali) the second time they met in the Sixties.

For, while it's true that Pacquiao had lost by a unanimous decision, the identical scores of 115-113 by the three judges would tend to show that Morales won 7 rounds against Pacquiao's 5. It was that close. (I had that same score.)

Had the head butt-caused cut in the fifth been ruled intentional by referee Joe Cortes, who knows the corresponding penalty against Morales might have changed the complexion of the fight.

And how about if Pacquiao had not suffered that ugly wound?

You fight with only one good eye, why that's like driving your car in the driving rain with the left wiper out of order and your car is a left-hand drive.

And how about if it were Morales who absorbed the eye injury instead—things might have turned out differently and maybe favored Pacquiao?

This is not an attempt to justify Pacquiao's defeat. As I said, we lost. I believe that wholeheartedly.

No, not that Pacquiao lacked his usual power in this fight. He might have been way off with his rhythm at times. But you saw him connect, especially in the 12th, where he tagged Morales a number of times with crisp blows while he went at it one last time with all his guns ablaze.

It was just that, the one big punch that he was known for never came. This was just not his day, fellas.

It was, also, that Morales proved too slippery, classy if you will, to be caught flush on the chin by the famed Pacquiao brick-laden punch.

Bottom line is, "El Terible" had done his homework well against the "Pac Man." Meaning, Morales had fought his fight—and he did it well up to the very end. The 12th round barroom brawl was Morales' way of saying, after he had secured the win, "It's show time, folks."

Morales delivered his script so flawlessly that he moved and glided unceasingly early in every round, and then made his move toward the latter part of it with his own burst of shots that, at times, jarred Pacquiao.

That was the strategy I had feared most that's why I kept repeating here before the fight that, if Pacquiao failed to knock Morales out in five rounds, Morales would win on points after 12 rounds.

Peter Lee of Hong Kong Tea House, Jun Velasco and Gerry Garcia of Sunday PUNCH and Ariel de Jesus of Toyota MP remembered that only too well.

Still, while we are in mourning, it is well to remember again the saying, "It's not in the rising but in the falling."

I still believe that from the ruins of his defeat, Pacquiao, only 26 years old, will rise like the phoenix.

Very soon, that is.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TV GUIDE
Tuesday, March 22, 2005

SINO ANG BABANGGA SA GINEBRA?
PBA
ABC iba tayo
2005 PBA FIESTA CONFERENCE
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ClickTheCity.com

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema				Showbiz No. 1 (4:25 PM)	Gatekeepers (5:10 PM)	Gundam Seed (5:35 PM)	The Road To Stardom	TV Patrol		Spirits	Krystala	Hiram	Save The Last Dance	'Til Death Do Us Part	Bora			Insider
NBN		Taiwan Winner TV Shopping		Value Vision	Teledyaryo	Value Vision		MMDA On The Road		Network Forum		Teledyaryo		Family Rosary Crusade		Paco Park Presents		Auto Focus	
ABC 5	Problema Nyo, Sagot Ko	KNN	Anime Ring Kasho		Anime Ring Kasho		Sentro	Lizzie Mcguire	Three Blind Dates		Wow Mali		Big News	The Probe Team Documentaries		Race Hour	Billboard On-Air		
GMA 7		Saang Sulok Ng Langit	Joyride	Glass Shoes	One Piece	Knock Out	Tykur Hungry Heart	24 Oras		Extra Challenge		Mulawin		Full House	Stairway To Heaven	Bahay Mo Ba 'To?			Sakal
RPN 9	Metro TV Shopping			Hey Arnold!	As Told By Ginger	Wild Thornberries	Sponge Bob	Entertainment Tonight	8 Simple Rules	Malcolm In The Middle	NBA On RPN					Newswatch Now	David Blaine		
IBC 13		Lifestyle		EZ Shop		Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Pangarap Kong Jackpot		Home Shopping Network		Mosconi Cup					IBC News Tonite	Up Close And Personal	
Solar		Wwe Raw				Mutant League	Heavy Gear	Maxxtel	Dungeons And Dragons	Stargate SG1		Soldier Of Fortune		RHD/LA		The Wire		Oz	
Nickelodeon	Blues Clues	Rugrats	The Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	All That	Are You Afraid of the Dark?	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	As Told By Ginger	Nick Mix						Rugrats
MYX		Urban MYX	MYX Backtrax	Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Mellow MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	Urban MYX	Top Of The Pops	MYX Remakes	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX	Mellow MYX
ETC	Change of Heart	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Starting Over		Good Morning Miami	Knock First	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	JKX	Simple Life	One Tree Hill		Showbiz Moms And Dads		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	Young, Sexy & ...	
Cinema One		Anghel Sa Lupa				Nakausap Ko Ang Birhen		Annabelle Huggins, Ruben Ablaza Tragedy				Mr. Suave				Gumapang Ka Sa Lusak			
Studio 23				PBL Game 2				Ragnarok	Project Arms	Wazzup Wazzup	Angel			Smallville		News Central	Oprah		The Men's Room
AXN		CSI: Miami				Fear Factor		Samurai X		Andromeda (Season III)		The Contender		When Animals Attack		The Amazing Race 5		Maximum Exposure	
Star World	Fraser	The Bold & The Beautiful		Hollywood Squares	Home Improvement	Ally McBeal		The Simpsons	The Drew Carey Show	Star News Asia	Friends	Charmed		Wild Card		Miss Match		Friends	Charmed
CNN				Business International		Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	Business International		World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
National Geographic		Air Crash Investigation		Seconds From Disaster		Interpol Investigates		The Snake Wranglers	Croc Chronicles Dr. Brady Barr	Wow		About Asia		Nat'l Geographic Specials		Air Crash Investigation		Seconds From Disaster	
Solar Sports		IBF China Super Grand Prix MS		RP-Taiwan 9 Ball Chall. Day3					Davis Cup '05 France vs Sweden 1st rd.				NBA TV Daily	NBA Game Orlando @ Charlotte					NBA Inside Stuff
Lifestyle Network	Secret Gardens	The Fix	Mission Organization	Carol Duvall	Molto Mario	Hot Off The Grill	Good Eats	Extreme Cuisine	Unwrapped	Passion For Dessert							Back To Basics		
HBO				The Wild Thornberry's Movie (3:50 PM)		Cybermutt (5:15 PM)			Star Trek Generations (6:45 PM)				Bulletproof (8:40 PM)			Six Feet Under 38: Twilight/Six Feet Under 39: I'm Sorry, I'm Lost	Freddy vs. Jason (11:45PM)		
Star Movies	Dance With Me (2:40 PM)				Hollywood One On One	Madeline (5:15 PM)				Cape Fear (6:50 PM)				Meet Joe Black					
Cartoon Network	Scooby-Doo Show	The All New Popeye Show		Tom & Jerry Show	The Woody Woodpecker Show	Sylvester & Tweety Mysteries	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	X-Men Evolution	Static Shock	Yu-Gi-Oh!	Shaman King	The Looney Tunes Show		The Powerpuff Girls	Dexter's Laboratory	Mr. T	Josie And The Pussycats	The Superfriends	Yu-Gi-Oh!
ESPN		English Premier League Highlights		2005 Big East C'ship Georgetown vs. Connecticut				LPGA Golf Safeway Int'l Presented by Coca-Cola				Sportscenter Asia	2004 Int'l. Chall of Champs Unc. CT USA, Pro Billiards '04 Trick Shot Magic NY, USA		2004 Women's Tournament of Champions		Sportscenter Asia		
Disney Channel	Mr Bean The Animated Series	Totally Spies	The Sleepover Club	Art Attack/Untalkative Bunny	That's So Raven	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr Bean The Animated Series	Lilo & Stitch/Untalkative Bunny	Land Before Time V: The Mysterious Island			My Wife And Kids	That's So Raven	America's Funniest Home Video	According To Jim	Treasure Island	
Cinemax	The Scorpion King (2:45 PM)				Obsessed			Weapons Of Mass Destruction			Bad To The Bone			The Bourne Identity				Caught In The Headlights	
Hallmark Channel	Mad About You	Lives Of The Saints				Play With Me Sesame	Sesame Street		Bewitched	Judging Amy		Just Cause		Lives Of The Saints			Missing (10:35PM)		Judging Amy (11:25PM)
Discovery Channel		Civilizations				Wild Science		Ultimate Discovery		Ricks		Human Discovery		Wild Discovery		Ultimate Discovery		Science Mysteries	
Sports Plus						Arena Football: Tampa Bay @ Philadelphia						NCAA rd 2				NBA Game Portland @ LA Clippers			
EWTN	Pope John Paul's Legacy To The Family	Angelus (3:15 PM)	Mysteries Of The Rosary	My Little Angels	Angel Force	The Holy Rosary With Mother Angelica and the Nuns Of Our Lady Of Angels Monastery	Fr. Groeschel	Catholic Morality & The Catechism	EWTN Gallery	The Journey Home		Does The Church Still Teach That	Lord, Have Mercy	Daily Mass		Angelus (10:15PM)	We Are One Body	Web Of Faith	

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

Ang inyong tagapaghatid ng ulat-pangmulat
TUWING HUWEBES pagkatapos ng American Idol
Ating kabalitaan
Cheri Mercado
Dito lang sa ABC
INQ TV

James' 56 points can't rescue Cavs

TORONTO—LeBron James became the youngest player to score 50 points in an NBA game, but his franchise-record 56 weren't enough to prevent the Toronto Raptors from beating the Cleveland Cavaliers, 105-98 on Sunday.

James easily surpassed his previous career best of 43 points, set Nov. 24 against Detroit. However, he committed a key turnover with 16 seconds left and missed a pair of 3-point attempts in the final 14 seconds.

James finished 18-for-36 from the field and 14-for-15 from the line. He also had six 3-pointers, 10 rebounds and five assists. But Toronto's bench did in the Cavaliers, outscoring Cleveland's reserves, 34-1.

At 20 years, 80 days old, James eclipsed Rick Barry as the youngest player to score 50 points. Barry was 21 years, 261 days old when he scored 57 for San Francisco against the New York Knicks.

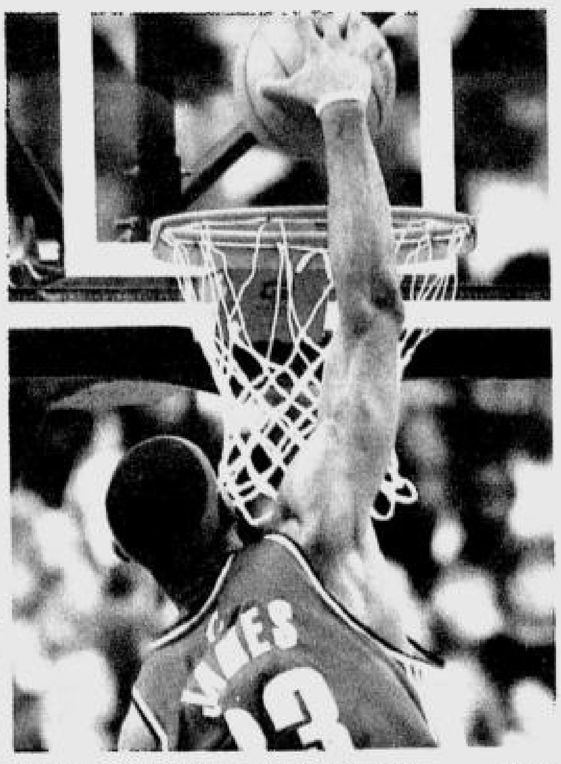
James' point total also bested the previous Cavaliers mark of 50 set by Walt Wesley against Cincinnati on Feb. 19, 1971.

In Auburn Hills, Michigan, Tim Duncan sprained his ankle moments after the tip and did not return, and Detroit went on to win a matchup of the last two NBA champions.

Chauncey Billups scored 25 points, including five straight late after the Spurs pulled within two, to lead Detroit to its 12th straight home victory.

COMPLETE RESULTS: Toronto 105, Cleveland 98; New Jersey 94, Indiana 85; Detroit 110, San Antonio 101; Phoenix 97, Memphis 91; Minnesota 94, Houston 86; Golden State 104, Sacramento 94; Denver 114, Milwaukee 103; Seattle 102, LA Lakers 100.

AP



JAMES: Youngest player to score 50 points. REUTERS

N.C. State eliminates Connecticut

WORCESTER, Massachusetts—Julius Hodge scored on a slashing drive through the lane with 4.3 seconds left to give North Carolina State a 65-62 victory over defending champion Connecticut on Sunday, and send the Wolfpack to the round-of-16 of the U. college basketball championship tournament.

North Carolina State, the 10th seed in the Syracuse Regional, advances to the regional semifinals for the first time since 1989 and will play Wisconsin.

The Huskies' loss also was a setback for the Big East conference, which has lost four teams so far, including a No. 2 seed and two No. 4 seeds.

Hodge was fouled by Ed Nelson on his drive and completed the three-point play. Marcus Williams' desperation 3 at the buzzer fell short.

AP

SPORTSWATCH

High hopes for Lady Eagles

HOPES are high for a major twin title for Ateneo in the coming school year. After the Lady Eagles captured the National Students' championship in Dumaguete City recently—the first time that Ateneo had a team in the annual event—athletic director Jose Capistrano Jr. is looking forward to a more fruitful 2005-2006. Capistrano said winning the UAAP Season 68 crown is within sight, and so is retaining the National Students' crown. "The Ateneo community is very proud of the Lady Eagles, especially in their conquest in Dumaguete [National Students]," said Capistrano. In Dumaguete, the Lady Eagles, runners-up to Adamson in UAAP Season 67, stormed their way to the title, limiting all their opponents to less than 50 points. "They played the games of their lives," said head coach John Flores. Sophomore Cassie Tioseco was named tournament MVP. Flores' staff include Rico Perez, Haydee Ong, Ron Camara, Joey Mendoza and psychologist Marissa Adviento.

Jrs badminton lures banner field

A BANNER field of 332 players will vie for top honors in the two-category JVC Badminton Open Juniors Championships, which fires off April 2 at SM North Edsa. Peter Magnaye of PNP heads the crack roster in the boys' 14-under class which drew 27 of the country's top junior players. They include Randolf Balatbat, Paul Jefferson Vivas, Roden Rivera Jr. of Bulacan/Team Valencia, Jed Mikhail Perez of Bulacan State U, Enzo Guevarra of La Salle-Greenhills, Ian Bautista, JP Babad of Team Battledore and Patrique Magnaye, Bianca Legaspi of Asuncion Badminton Center and Gelita Castillo of Centro Atletico lead the title chase in the girls' side of the event exclusively for players 14-years-old and below. The tournament, sponsored by JVC in cooperation with the SM chain of malls and backed by Gosen, Cebu Pacific, Water Front Hotels and Lactacyd, will run till May 29. Also on tap is the 10-under division with Malvinne Alcala looming as the player to beat in the girls' side. Jan Banquiles and Al Crave Chan are tipped to clash for the boys' diadem. For details, contact (045) 860 9999/ 0918 3902134/ 0917 8120194.

Iligan Eco Adventure Race April 4-6

ILIGAN City—The Conquer Iligan Eco Adventure Race 2005 is set for April 4-6 here. The race course is set along a 300-kilometer adventure terrain covering towns, mountains, coastlines and open sea. The three-day race will include trail running sections, rubber tubing, mountain biking, trekking, swimming, padding, rope sections and few other surprises as well. Each team will have a maximum of three racers with a least one member of the opposite sex. Registration fee is P2,000 inclusive of post race dinner, souvenir shirt, equipment rental, camp site and adventure of a lifetime. Prizes are P40,000.00 for the first prize plus trophy, P20,000, P10,000, P5,000 and P1,000 for the second, third, fourth and fifth, respectively. For inquiries, call 063-2216622, 063-2237763 or log on to www.geocities.com/care iligan.

Balce leads age group winners

FAVORITES Mark Balce, Miko Santiago and Joshua Tan Ho disposed their respective rivals in the initial hostilities of the Gov. Muslim "Wahab" Akbar Age Group 2005 tennis championship at the PCA courts, Plaza Dilao, Paco, over the weekend. Balce defeated Akio Sy, 6-3, 6-2, in the 16-year-old boys category while 14-year-old Miko Santiago disposed Joman Narvaez, 7-5, 6-0. Tan Ho outclassed Carlos Espedido, 6-2, 6-1, in the 18-year-old boys category. Samantha Coyouito proved too strong for Brysil Libao, 6-2, 6-2, in the girls category of the event supported by Basilan Governor Akbar. Nassau-Prince is the official ball and racket.

Para sa Bayan 7-Bullstag Derby

GAMEFOWL industry leader Thunderbird Power Feeds and Univet go all out for the first-ever official bullstag derby in the country hosted by the National Federation of Gamefowl Breeders. Dubbed as "Para sa Bayan" National 7-Bullstag Derby, the event's proceeds will go to the Philippine Sports Commission to help raise funds for the 23rd Southeast Asian Games to be held here this year. The event was conceptualized upon the intercession of Philippine Olympic Committee President Peping Cojuangco, a respected cockfighter who was the inducting officer and guest speaker during the NFGB Induction of Officers for 2005. Set at the Araneta Coliseum, the tourney will have two separate three-bullstag eliminations on April 18 and 19, anchored by the 4-bullstag finals on April 21. Those interested may contact their local association president.

RACING TIPS

AT SLLP BY MR. 999

Race 1—1. Do It David 2. Ocean Cookie 3. Guest House 4. Hezabellagio

Race 2—1. Earl Gray 2. Moneyline 3. Sharon's Cookie 4. Worthy Princess/Crowning Glory

Race 3—1. Just A Moment 2. Dashing 3. Stout Hearted 4. Conglomerate

Race 4—1. Suonos 2. Alexi's Magic

Race 5—1. Pasirit 2. Jellbeanjoy/Maraya's Fantasy 3. Here I Come 4. Cunning Eagle

Race 6—1. Superwoman 2. Silver Dollar 3. War Bird

Race 7—1. Jedi 2. Split Decision 3. Well Noted 4. Bella Firenze

Race 8—1. Iron Mic 2. King Yoji 3. Audrey's Temper 4. Fighter 5. Speed Admiral 6. Tervalac

LAWYER Jose Redoblado, ALFI corporate secretary; Frank Evaristo, ALFI president; Gov. Boy Valencia of Kiwanis International Richard Agbayani of Kiwanis Club Manila and Ambassador Francisco Atayde, director and governor elect of Rotary International 3810, did the ceremonial tee-off of the recent Alay-Lakad Foundation Inc. golf tournament.

Federer crushes Hewitt

INDIAN WELLS, California—World number one Roger Federer produced another dominant display to crush number two Lleyton Hewitt, 6-2, 6-4, 6-4, in the final of the Pacific Life Open on Sunday.

In a coolly efficient and often spectacular dismantling of the Australian, Federer never allowed Hewitt into the contest, controlling his opponent from both the backcourt and at the net.

"My game has a lot to do with footwork," Federer said. "When I'm moving well, I play well. This week I've played and felt fantastic.

In attempting to upset the number one, the usually steady Hewitt took risks but the strategy backfired.

He registered 31 unforced errors, the same as Federer, but the Swiss nailed 41 winners to only 18 from the Australian.

Hewitt said he injured toes on both his feet in his three-set victory over Andy Roddick in the semifinals and is questionable for next week's tournament in Miami.

The Australian felt he struck the ball well, but couldn't put together proper game plan.

"Roger's a tough guy," he said. "I probably went for a little more than I needed to. But against a guy like Roger, his movement is superior."

Reuters

Annika tops playoff; Jenny 12th

SUPERSTITION MOUNTAIN, Arizona—Filipina Jennifer Rosales shot a two-under-par 70 and wound up tied for 12th in the $1.4 million Safeway International won by Annika Sorenstam on Sunday.

Rosales, winner of the inaugural SBS Open last month, finished with a 284 total and pocketed $23,964 (about P1.29M).

Lorena Ochoa, four strokes ahead with only three holes to play, still couldn't hold off Sorenstam who downed the Mexican in a playoff to win the $210,000 top purse.

Sorenstam posted a two-under-par 70 to finish tied with Ochoa at 11-under 277 after 72 holes.

The world's top-ranked player parred 18 in the playoff to win her second tournament in as many starts this season and the 58th of her career.

Sorenstam has now won four events in a row and six of the last eight she has entered.

"I love the thrill of coming down the stretch and knowing that you have to hit a certain shot at a certain time," Sorenstam said. "That's really what gets me going." Ochoa's slide started with a double-bogey at the par-four 16th. At 17 she took bogey when her par putt lipped out, and headed to the par-five 18th with her lead cut to one shot.

The 16th hole was Ochoa's undoing throughout the tournament. She played it at five-over, with double-bogeys Saturday and Sunday.

AFP

Ateneo-La Salle scholarships up

THE ANNUAL Ateneo-La Salle golf tournament is changing for the better this year.

Given the much-needed shot in the arm by PLDT and Smart, the tourney will mean a lot more than a traditional showdown among alumni and students of the two schools.

The Ateneo-La Salle fairway tiff will also provide scholarships to two students—one in each prestigious institution—starting this coming school year after organizers forged a deal with Smart to earmark part of the sponsorship deal for grants targeting young golfers all over the country.

The Ateneo-La Salle duel is scheduled on April 4 at the Eagle Ridge Golf and Country Club, the country's biggest golf club located in Gen. Trias, Cavite. A separate seniors competition for players 60 years and above will be held on April 1 at the Alabang Country Club.

For inquiries, call 426-6081 (Ateneo) and 523-6158/526-5612 (La Salle). Registration deadline is March 29.

Epson Cup 2 leveling meet ends today

EPSON Cup 2 will hold its final leveling session today at the Pioneer Badminton Center.

Tournament director EG Lim will conduct the special leveling beginning at 6 p.m. at the PBC on Pioneer Street, Mandaluyong City. The leveling fee is P50.

Sanctioned by the Philippine Badminton Association, Epson Cup 2 will hold its qualifying rounds at the Olympic Badminton Club in Libis, Quezon City, on April 9-10, while the semifinals and finals will be held at the Greenhills Badminton Center in San Juan on April 15-17.

Tournament chair Edmin Tarriela said today's leveling was triggered by numerous requests of participants who failed the sessions on March 12-13 and March 19-20.

"We don't put a limit on the number of participants who want to join and that spelled a tremendous turnout after five leveling sessions," said Tarriela.

The event is sponsored by Shell, Wilson, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Citibank, Apple Center, Konica (Photo Columbia), Mizuno, UNO Magazine, Magic 89.9, 99.5 RT, Yehey.com, PBNet, Fitness First and Ridgewood Residence-Baguio.

Epson marketing manager Randy Kanapi said active and former national team players are barred from joining the tournament, which seeks to discover talented players in the grassroots level.

Registration fee for the main tournament is pegged at P500. For inquiries, call Pioneer Badminton Center at 638-5343, 746-0828.

A YOUNG participant shows her mettle.

PERRY: Vijay gave me the tournament. AP

It's Perry, Singh gets back No. 1

ORLANDO, Florida—Vijay Singh's double-bogey at the last cost him victory at the Bay Hill Invitational on Sunday, but even as Kenny Perry celebrated his win, Singh regained the world number one ranking.

Perry and Singh were tied until Singh hit his approach shot into the water at the par-four 18th, handing Perry victory.

Singh aimed at the flag with a seven-iron from 174 yards, but the shot landed a few feet short, hit the rocks and bounced into the hazard.

"I thank Vijay for giving me the tournament," said Perry, who had the luxury of being able to play safe to the left side of the green before two-putting from 70 feet for a two-shot victory.

"He attacks the pin on just about every hole. He has no fear," Perry said. "That's just the way he plays golf.

"I was stunned when he came up short. Watching his ball, it looked like it was going to fly right next to the hole. That was nice, knowing I could play left and three-putt to win."

AFP

2 squads out to break ice in Velo Challenge

TAGAYTAY International Convention Center (TICC) and Quezon City will try to get back on track at the resumption today of the First Philippine Velo Challenge at the newly refurbished Amoranto Velodrome in Quezon City.

Unable to snare golds in the opener, TICC, behind Nilo Estayo, and Quezon City, led by the versatile Paterno Curtan, will try to keep in stride with Elixir, MayniLA, Puerto Princesa and Wescor, all of which won at least a gold medal each Saturday.

MayniLA's Jerwin Torres clinched two junior gold medals while Elixir captured four titles to touch off their campaigns in the event co-presented by the First Gentleman Foundation of lawyer Jose Miguel Arroyo and Air21 (Sagot Ko, Padala Mo!) and Tour Pilipinas Inc.

The races, aired live by dzSR Sports Radio 918, start at 8:30 a.m. and end around noon in the event which has Pagcor and the Philippine Sports Commission as major supporters and the Philippine Olympic Committee, Isuzu D-Max, Sharp Phils., San Miguel Corp., dzSR Sports Radio, Vittoria Tires, 93.9 iFM, RMN dzXL 558, David's Salon and Intrasports as backers..

Big turnout for TM 9-Ball Champion's League

A BIG turnout of billiards hopefuls of all ages marked the start of registration for the pre-qualifying tournament of the TM 9-Ball Champion's League, a first-of-its-kind 9-ball billiards tournament which fires off April 11 at the SM Supermall in San Fernando, Pampanga.

Organizers led by Ramon Tuason, who also put up the Metropolitan Basketball Association (MBA) some years back, said a big number of participants has entered the pre-qualifying set April 2 and 3 to select members of the Pampanga team for the tournament proper.

Qualifying tourneys will also be held on the same dates in Pangasinan and the cities of Pasig and Parañaque.

Touch Mobile, a believer in the Filipino athletes' talent, launched the league in an effort to find successors to Efren "Bata" Reyes and Francisco "Django" Bustamante.

Eight teams have joined the first salvo of the TM 9-Ball Champion's League, organized by Jemah Sports and Tuason's RocketMan Enterprises. The tournament, backed by Accel and aired over IBC 13 from 8-9 pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays, will tour Dasmariñas and Carmona in Cavite, Parañaque, and Manila.

Cavite Gov. Ayong Maliksi, Parañaque Vice Mayor Anjo Yllana and Manila Sports Council (Masco) chair Ali Atienza will act as team managers of their respective squads.

Pampanga, Pangasinan, Makati, Pasig and Batangas are the other teams in the event.

Recycling seemed to be the program's sub-theme, with familiar gowns resurfacing on new bodies

FAREWELL walk, from left, 2004 queens Margaret Ann Bayot, Maricar Balagtas and Karla Bautista

HOST Paolo Bediones conducts question-answer portion.

RICAMARIE Ann Taylor, center, in the outfit worn by former titlist Karla Bautista during the parade two weeks ago.

Palm Sunday finish for Bb. Pilipinas 2005

**By Marinel R. Cruz
and Armin Adina
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan**

THE BINIBINING Pilipinas coronation ceremony on Saturday night at the Araneta Coliseum lasted until the early hours of Palm Sunday.

It was already midnight when last year's winners, Maricar Balagtas (Bb. Pilipinas-Universe), Margaret Ann Bayot (International) and Karla Bautista (World), did their farewell walks.

Then it took another half hour before the new queens—Gionna Cabrera (Universe), Carlene Aguilar (World), Precious Lara Quigaman (International)—could be crowned and, finally, presented to the media.

The delayed telecast on GMA 7 that night was almost four hours long. This was because the gaps were excruciatingly long.

At one point, a group in the audience shouted: "Paolo, *palaspas na* (It's Palm Sunday already)!" They were addressing Paolo Bediones, who co-hosted with Richard Gomez and Raymond Gutierrez.

During one of the long gaps, Paolo advised the restless audience, "Save your energy. *Malalim pa kasi ang gabi* (It's going to be a long night)." The crowd, blowing plastic horns and waving streamers and placards, were hysterically cheering for their candidates.

The program started with a production number featuring the 23 candidates. Halfway through the show, Jerome John Hughes and Nyoy and The Mannos serenaded the candidates while the girls were showing off their evening gowns. The Sexbomb Girls presented a "surprise" number strictly for the live audience—it was not aired on television.

Recycling seemed to be a sub-theme. Certain gowns and crowns looked familiar. Ricamarie Ann Taylor's purple gown, for instance, was the same one that Bautista wore during the candidate's parade around the Araneta Center two Sundays ago.

The gold number sported by Balagtas during her farewell walk was the gown said to have cost Nina Ricci Alagao's bid for the Miss Universe 2000 crown in Cyprus.

In her own final walk, Bayot appeared in a red outfit similar to the one she wore when she won last year.

Miss Tourism International 2001 and Miss Tourism World 2002 Michelle Reyes, who was one of the judges that night, was seen in the aqua gown that Maricar wore in the candidates' parade.

The Binibining Pilipinas Charities Inc. seems to have laid to rest the gigantic crowns that previous queens wore. But the crown put on Aguilar's head was the same one that Miriam Quiambao and four other Bb. Pilipinas-Universe winners used.

Wendy Valdez, first runner-up and recipient of the Department of Tourism's Binibining Pilipinas-Tourism award, wore the crown previously used by Anna Gonzalez, Binibining Pilipinas-Look of the Year 1993.

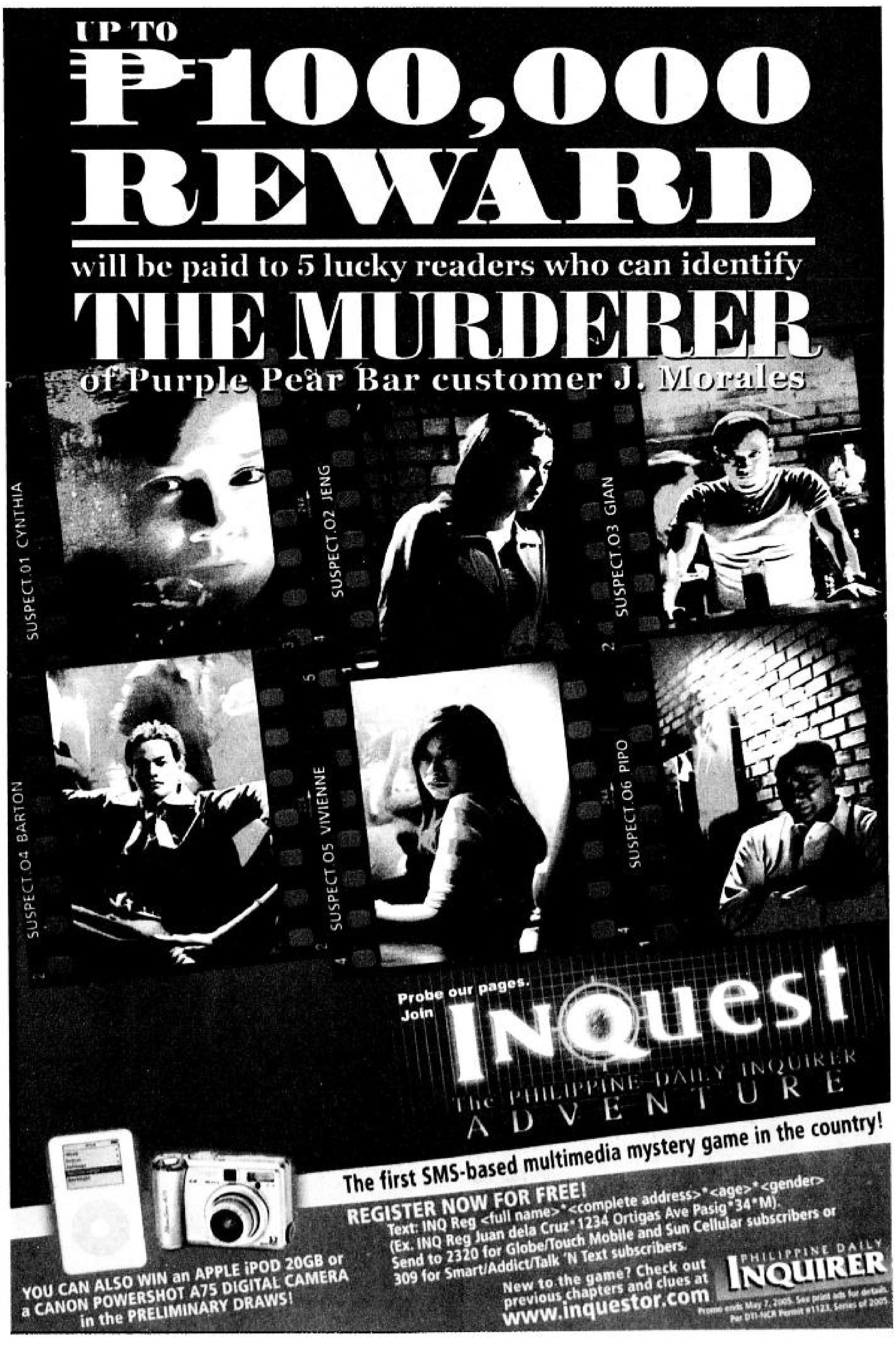
Among the three hosts, Paolo was the most effective. He was relaxed, handled technical problems well, and came up with the wittiest remarks for the audience.

Richard Gomez tried to engage the audience in conversation, too. "Next is the question-and-answer portion," he said at one point. "We should've asked Melanie Marquez to come up here."

If that was a joke, no one caught it.

RICHARD Gomez, co-host

RAYMOND Gutierrez chats up the audience.



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VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

HOST: Wasn't it so sad to see (name of starlet) behaving so shockingly at the party? How is she now?

Co-host: Better. I hear, under a psychiatrist *ngayon ang artista.*

(He isn't heavy, he's my psychiatrist!)

* * *

Host: How do you handle all the harsh criticism that has been coming your way?

Guest: Well, OK *lang*. After all, as they say, you cannot please all the one!

(No, they *don't* say that!)

* * *

Host: What do you like doing on your free time to unwind after your busy work schedule?

Guest: I sports!

(Ah, so you're athletics!)

* * *

Host: Have the rumors about your husband's affairs reached you? How do you take them?

Guest: They don't really bother me. I'm secure about him. I know my husband is a one-man woman!

(*Baliktad yata!*—Now you've really got us worried.)

* * *

Host: What can we do to solve the problems that are affecting the country?

Guest: The problems are so many and serious that nothing less than drastic measures will work. When you're sick, you have to face the bitter pill that will make you well.

(*Ano daw?!*)

* * *

Host: Is it true that you and (name of actor) have broken up?

Guest: Yes, but we parted as friends.

Host: No bitterness between the two of you?

Guest: Oh no. I will always be grateful. I will remember the many tonights we spoke about so many things!

(How—poetic?)

* * *

Host: I hear that you're continuing your studies even if you're so busy with your show biz commitments. Isn't that hard?

Guest: Yes, but I have to do it, *kasi gusto kong maging propesyonal!*

(Well—study harder!)

* * *

Newscaster: *Ang* actor *na si* Dennis Roldan *diumano ay sangkot sa isang malaking kaso ng* kidnapping. (*Si* Dennis *ay si* Michelle—Mitchell!)

* * *

Host: What's the traffic like now? Let's get the latest from (name of field reporter).

Field Reporter: Sad to say, the afternoon traffic is already congesting—that means it's starting to pile up.

(Gee, thanks. We didn't know what "congesting" meant. Duh!)

* * *

Host: Do you expect more fires this summer?

Guest: Well, it's to be expected.

Host: So, what can the citizens do in case of fire?

Guest: *Basta, i-report lang nila agad sa pinakamalapot na istasyon.*

(*Ang* pronunciation *mo ang malapot, hindi yung istasyon!*)

* * *

Host: How do you think you will do in the finals of the singing competition next week?

Guest: I will give it everything I've got!

Host: Yes, but are you confident?

Guest: Well, I admit, I'm nervious!

(Obvious *ba*?)

* * *

Host: How close were you to the shooting in Mindanao when you were there last month?

Guest: We were *really* close. I know that, because I could hear the gunshoots!

(Bang! Bang! You're dead.)

Back-to-back video treats

WARNER Home Video has come out with a limited DVD and VCD edition box set of **Richard Linklater's** twin-bill romantic movies, "Before Sunrise" and "Before Sunset."

In "Before Sunrise," **Ethan Hawke** and **Julie Delpy** play strangers who meet on a train in Europe, explore Vienna together, and make a connection.

Nine years later, in "Before Sunset," they meet again in Paris—but they have only one afternoon to decide what to do with the rest of their lives, together or apart.

ETHAN HAWKE and Julie Delpy in "Before Sunset"

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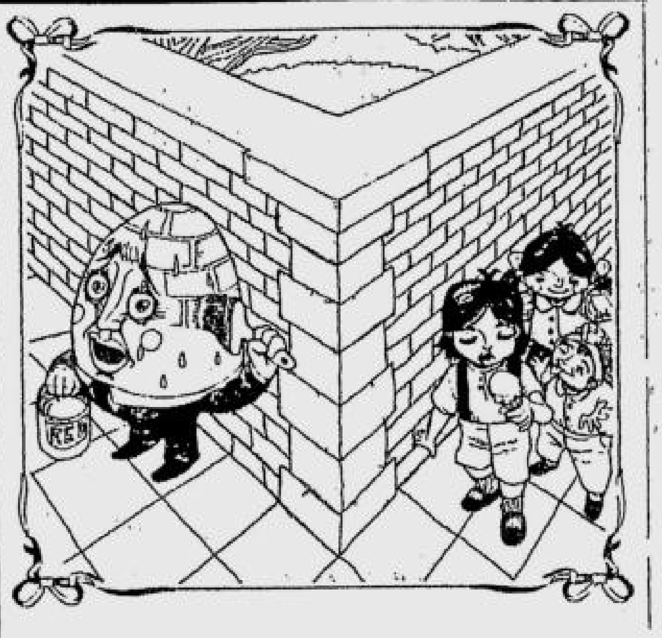

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10:50 1:05 3:20 5:35 7:40 10:00
4 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
11:40 2:15 4:50 7:25 10:00
5 BAHAY NI LOLA 2
10:45 1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00
6 HOSTAGE
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00
7 CURSED
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8 SHAOLIN VS. EVIL DEAD
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
9 MILLION DOLLAR BABY
11:00 1:50 4:40 7:30 10:00
10 CONSTANTINE
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12
1 ROBOTS
11:00 1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50
2 BAHAY NI LOLA 2
11:10 1:20 3:25 5:30 7:35 9:40
3 HOSTAGE
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4 CURSED
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6 SHAOLIN VS. EVIL DEAD
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7 HITCH
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BAHAY NI LOLA 2
CONSTANTINE
ROBOTS
CURSED

ALI MALL CINEMAS
1 BAHAY NI LOLA 2
2 HOSTAGE
3 ROBOTS
4 BIRHEN NG MANAOAG
5 SHAOLIN VS. EVIL DEAD

Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 BAHAY NI LOLA
2 BUKO PANDAN
3 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13
4

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470
1 BAHAY NI LOLA

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 MASK-2 SON OF THE MASK
2 BAHAY NI LOLA 2
3 ROBOTS
4 IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE

Cine Nepo
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121
1 BAHAY NI LOLA
2 WEREWOLF
3 (DOLBY) MASK-2 SON OF THE MASK
4 (DTS) ROBOTS

Cine Nepo
(Dagupan City) tel (075) 515.8489
1 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
2 INFECTION
3 (DOLBY) THE AVIATOR
4 (DTS) CONSTANTINE

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 INFECTION
2 LEMONY SNICKETS

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City)
tel 687.6963 or 72
1 (DOLBY) PACIFIER
2 (DOLBY) MS. CONGENIALITY 2
3 (DOLBY) ROBOTS
4 (DOLBY) HOSTAGE

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Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 FINAL CUT
2 (DTS) BAHAY NI LOLA
3 (DOLBY) ROBOTS
4 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Binan) tel (049) 411.1146
1 BAHAY NI LOLA
2 (DOLBY) FINAL CUT
3 (DTS) ROBOTS
4 MASK-2 SON OF THE MASK

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
2 INFECTION
3 (DOLBY) CONSTANTINE

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 BUNSHINSABA
2 INFECTION
3 (DOLBY) MASK-2 SON OF THE MASK
4 (DTS) CONSTANTINE

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795 3320
1 BUNSHINSABA
2 BAHAY NI LOLA
3 (DOLBY) MASK-2 SON OF THE MASK

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 (SDDS) CHAIN OF COMMAND
2 WALANG MALISYA
3 KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
4 (DTS) CONSTANTINE

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 (DOLBY) PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
2 BAHAY NI LOLA
3 (DTS) ROBOTS
4 BUKID AY BASA
5 FINAL CUT

Mega Center Mall
(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283
1 MASK-2 SON OF THE MASK
2 INFECTION
3 (DTS) BIRHEN NG MANAOAG
4 (DOLBY) THE AVIATOR

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 HITCH
2 LEMONY SNICKETS
3 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
4 FINAL CUT

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 BUKID AY BASA
2 SHAOLIN VS' EVILDEAD

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT
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MONSOUR Del Rosario

CHIN-CHIN Gutierrez

MELANIE Marquez

Good Samaritans in show biz

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

SINCE it's Holy Tuesday, I'd like to tone down on show biz controversies. In lieu of that, allow me to focus on some of the celebrities who have been Good Samaritans in dealing with the latest show biz issues affecting them. Show biz can sometimes be like the Way of the Cross. Every actor must be able to endure the flagellation caused by intrigues. In the biz, Pontius Pilates who feign innocence (the denial kings and queens) and Judas Escariots who con people (the *ingratos*) abound. But of course there are also kind-hearted disciples. They are the ones who make the biz a little less like Calvary.

CESAR MONTANO—Buboy is spearheading a fundraising campaign for the children of his native Bohol who died/got critically ill due to food poisoning. He is mounting a show at Merk's on April 2 called "Panaghoy ng Mga Bata," in which he and his celebrity friends will perform *gratis et amore*.

LITO LAPID— The dashing senator took the liberty of talking to some of his columnist friends (in the tabloids) to go easy on his good friend **Sen. Bong Revilla**. He requested the writers to stop the Bong-bashing brought about by the "family feud" between Bong/Lani and Rosanna Roces.

LORNA TOLENTINO—It's been 15 years since LT had a falling out with her former best friend **Deborah Sun**. It ended up in a legal battle. Even if LT won and Deborah was sentenced to serve time in jail, LT let Deborah escape to the US just like that. Now that Deborah is back in town and suffering from liver cancer, LT says that she has forgiven her friend and hopes that Deborah gets the liver transplant she badly needs. LT is not even demanding payment anymore of Deborah's huge debt. She just wishes that Deborah will talk to her in person, for old times' sake.

ANGEL LOCSIN—A staff member of a TV show told me how concerned and worried Angel was when a bit player figured in a minor accident during their taping. She told the crew to rush the "extra" to a hospital immediately. It turned out they were just playing a trick on her since it was a comedy show. But her having a good heart really showed. What more if the accident was for real?

CHIN-CHIN GUTIERREZ—This beauty inside out unceasingly does her share to protect Mother Nature even when nobody's looking. It's always been her priority. Show biz is just a job for her. Caring for Mother Earth her true vocation.

MONSOUR DEL ROSARIO—This former Olympian has made it his lifetime mission to train kids and turn them into good athletes like himself. Mon recently had a Taekwondo Open in Boracay in which kids from all walks of life were given a chance to shine. Not to mention the fab prizes they won. Mon is willing to teach kids even for free as long as they have the heart and drive for sports. While other action stars whine when they have no movies, Mon keeps himself busy by sharing his martial arts expertise with the youth.

Reader's corner

Hi, Dolly Ann,

After I read this article from the online newspaper's entertainment section, about Melanie's unfortunate experience in the Mrs. World pageant, I immediately sent an e-mail to the Mrs World info line which ended up in the Mrs World President's inbox. Anyway, I would like to share with you the reply of **David Marmel**,

president Mrs World:

I'm reminded of the words of Mark Twain who after reading his published obituary stated "The news of my death is exaggerated." News she was mistreated? Well, that's news to us! Who's news? What specifically? Who mistreated here—where—when—how? We were there from the beginning and I can tell you without hesitation that news is not news at all. She was treated with dignity and care. We were taken with her beauty, grace and charm. She placed very well in the competition and we were proud to feature her as a spectacular delegate from the Philippines. If you or anyone has specific knowledge of the alleged maltreatment they are invited to enlighten us. We know of no such action because none existed. I created this pageant to applaud spectacular married women from around the world. The competition is fair, unbiased and treatment is balanced and professional. Each delegate including Mrs. Philippines received special treatment, each was treated as an honored guest. I will categorically reject your unfounded and untruthful allegations. They are false!

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Entertainment Guide
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HOSTAGE 12:00 / 2:30 / 5:00 / 7:30 / 10:00
HITCH 1:15 / 3:50 / 6:25 / 9:00
MILLION DOLLAR BABY 12:30 / 3:20 / 6:10 / 9:00
SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS 12:20 / 2:35 / 4:50 / 7:05 / 9:20
THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST 1:15 / 4:00 / 6:45 / 9:30
BAHAY NI LOLA 2 1:10 / 3:10 / 5:10 / 7:10 / 9:10
CONSTANTINE 12:10 / 2:35 / 5:00 / 7:25 / 9:50
ROBOTS 1:10 / 3:10 / 5:10 / 7:10 / 9:10
CURSED 12:35 / 2:45 / 4:55 / 7:05 / 9:15
Sneak Prev. - THE PACIFIER on March 21, 22 & 23
ALI MALL CINEMAS
❶ BAHAY NI LOLA 2 12:10 / 2:10 / 4:10 / 6:10 / 8:10
❷ HOSTAGE 12:55 / 3:25 / 5:55 / 8:25
❸ ROBOTS 12:10 / 2:10 / 4:10 / 6:10 / 8:10
❹ BIRHEN NG MANAOAG 12:20 / 2:20 / 4:20 / 6:20 / 8:20
❺ SHAOLIN vs EVIL DEAD 11:20 / 1:45 / 4:10 / 6:35 / 9:00
DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS
ARANETA COLISEUM SHOWS
OLPH LENTEN RETREAT (FREE ENTRY) March 24,25 & 26, 8am to 12nn
SHALOM LENTEN RETREAT (FREE ENTRY) March 24,25 & 26, 2pm to 10pm
THE CASCADES: LIVE IN MANILA April 15 Friday, 8pm
RIVERMAYA & KITCHIE NADAL LIVE! April 16, Saturday, 8pm
MARTIN NIEVERA & PATTI AUSTIN IN CONCERT April 22, Friday, 8pm
JA RULE LIVE IN MANILA April 23, Saturday 8pm
CENTER EVENTS
FORNARINA CLEARANCE SALE — Get up to 50% off on clothes, shoes and accessories. Upper Ground Floor, Gateway Mall ongoing until April 15
VAN HEUSEN DRESS SHIRT SALE — Get up to 50% off on assorted dress shirts. Ground Floor, Gateway Mall ongoing until March 31
OLYMPIC VILLAGE SUMMER PROMO — Get a FREE pair of shades for every P1000 purchase. Ground Floor, Gateway Mall ongoing until March 31
GUARANA LIVE! — Groove to the swinging samba beat of this renowned Latin band! Friday & Saturday, 9.30 pm onwards The Gazebo, Gateway Mall
LOG ON TO www.aranetacenter.net FOR MORE DETAILS OR TO SUBSCRIBE TO OUR WEEKLY E-MAIL ENTERTAINMENT UPDATES

TADO

Epy Quizon...

From page A28

important aspects of development."

Tado himself has three daughters, and totally shares Epy's enthusiasm. He says hosting "Art Jam" gives him a different perspective, since it has a different audience.

Epy explains: "It's more challenging to perform for children because they are critics with a pure philosophy—not fully influenced by external elements."

Through the Junk Art segment, the show teaches children the concept of sustainable development. "Art Jam,' being a relevant show for Filipino kids, is reversing the negative image of television," says Quizon.

It's easy to do, the two hosts agree, because it allows them both to be their "natural, normal" selves.

Executive producer Claudette Sevilla says the show is designed for children ages 9 to 15, or grade four to second year high school.

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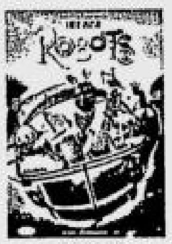
BAHAY NI LOLA 2
SUBJECT TO MTRCB RATING

BURNS
WEISZ
GARCIA
HOFFMAN
CONFIDENCE
CONFIDENCE
MTRCB Rating: PG 13



ROBOTS
MTRCB Rating: GP

SHAOLIN v.s EVIL DEAD
SUBJECT TO MTRCB RATING

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GUARANTEED SEATS

the podium cinema

1. ROBOTS
11:50 FS / 12:20 MF / 2:25 / 4:30 / 6:35
8:40 / 10:15 LFS / 10:45 LMF / 12:20 END
2. MS. CONGENIALITY 2
12:40 FS / 1:10 MF / 3:35 / 6:35
8:25 / 10:20 LFS / 10:50 LMF / 12:45 END

☎ 633-6876

sm megamall cinema 1

little BLACK BOOK
12:05 FS / 12:35 MF / 2:50 / 5:05 / 7:20
9:05 LFS / 9:40 LMF / 12:25 END

☎ 633-1901

sm cebu cinema 1

PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
11:30 MF / 2:00 / 4:30 / 7:00
9:22 LFS / 9:30 LMF / 11:50 END

☎ (032) 231-3876

METRO MANILA

sm megamall

1. LITTLE BLACK BOOK smcinemaexclusive
2. HOSTAGE
3. THE PACIFIER
4. MS. CONGENIALITY 2
5. ROBOTS
6. CONFIDENCE
7. HITCH
8. BAHAY NI LOLA 2
9. SHAOLIN v.s EVIL DEAD
10. RESERVED
11. RESERVED
12. RESERVED

sm city fairview

1. FINAL CUT
2. GOSPEL OF JOHN
3. CURSED
4. HOSTAGE
5. BAHAY NI LOLA 2
6. MS. CONGENIALITY 2
7. THE PACIFIER
8. ROBOTS
9. SHAOLIN v.s EVIL DEAD
10. CONSTANTINE
11. MILLION DOLLAR BABY
12. CURSED

sm city north edsa

1. RESERVED
2. RESERVED
3. BAHAY NI LOLA 2
4. CURSED
5. HOSTAGE
6. ROBOTS
7. MS. CONGENIALITY 2
8. THE PACIFIER

sm city manila

1. THE PACIFIER
2. MS. CONGENIALITY 2
3. LOVE ME IF YOU DARE smcinemaexclusive
4. ROBOTS
5. HITCH
6. CONFIDENCE
7. HOSTAGE
8. MILLION DOLLAR BABY
9. BAHAY NI LOLA 2
10. SHAOLIN v.s EVIL DEAD
11. CURSED
12. CONSTANTINE

sm city sta. mesa

1. RESERVED
2. RESERVED
3. RESERVED
4. BAHAY NI LOLA 2
5. THE PACIFIER
6. SHAOLIN v.s EVIL DEAD
7. ROBOTS
8. HOSTAGE
9. CURSED
10. MS. CONGENIALITY 2

sm city southmall

1. HOSTAGE
2. CURSED
3. RESERVED
4. RESERVED
5. HITCH
6. SHAOLIN v.s EVIL DEAD
7. BAHAY NI LOLA 2
8. THE PACIFIER
9. SHAOLIN v.s EVIL DEAD
10. MS. CONGENIALITY 2

sm city bicutan

1. THE PACIFIER
2. BAHAY NI LOLA 2
3. ROBOTS
4. MS. CONGENIALITY 2

sm cinema tutuban

1. RESERVED
2. RESERVED
3. RESERVED
4. RESERVED

sm supercenter sucat

1. ROBOTS
2. BAHAY NI LOLA 2
3. MS CONGENIALITY 2
4. THE PACIFIER

LUZON

sm city pampanga

1. SON OF THE MASK
2. MILLION DOLLAR BABY
3. THE FINAL CUT
4. HITCH
5. ROBOTS
6. BAHAY NI LOLA 2

sm city baguio

1. CONSTANTINE
2. GOSPEL OF JOHN
3. RACING STRIPES
4. HITCH

sm city batangas

1. SON OF THE MASK
2. CONSTANTINE
3. HITCH
4. MAD HOUSE

sm city dasmariñas

1. ROBOTS
2. BAHAY NI LOLA 2
3. CURSED
4. THE PACIFIER

sm city marilao

1. CONSTANTINE
2. LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS
3. BAHAY NI LOLA 2
4. SON OF THE MASK

sm city bacoor

1. FINAL CUT
2. THE PACIFIER
3. ROBOTS
4. MILLION DOLLAR BABY
5. HOSTAGE
6. BAHAY NI LOLA 2
7. MS. CONGENIALITY 2
8. GOSPEL OF JOHN

sm city lucena

1. SON OF THE MASK
2. BAHAY NI LOLA
3. INFECTION
4. CONSTANTINE

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

sm city cebu

1. PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
2. ROBOTS
3. RESERVED
4. RESERVED
5. BAHAY NI LOLA 2
6. BIRHEN NG MANAOAG
7. HOSTAGE
8. HITCH

sm city iloilo

1. BIRHEN NG MANAOAG
2. RESERVED
3. SON OF THE MASK
4. MILLION DOLLAR BABY
5. THE AVIATOR
6. ROBOTS
7. RESERVED
8. GOSPEL OF JOHN

sm city davao

1. ROBOTS
2. ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
3. BIRHEN NG MANAOAG
4. LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS
5. PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
6. HITCH

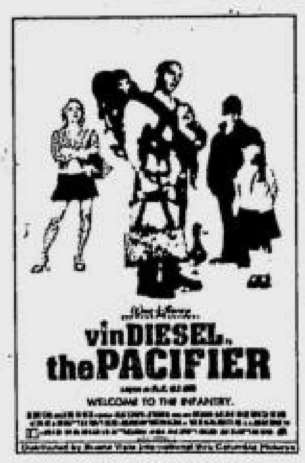
sm city cagayan de oro

1. THE AVIATOR
2. BIRHEN NG MANAOAG
3. INFECTION
4. FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX

SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

sm previews

Sandra Bullock
miss Congeniality 2
Armed and Fabulous
MARCH 22 & 23



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AYALA CINEMAS

THX

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G4	GLORIETTA 4	1 ROBOTS	2 THE PACIFIER	THX HOSTAGE 12:50, 3:15, 5:40, 8:05, 10:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	
		4 CONFIDENCE	5 SPANGLISH	6 MISS CONGENIALITY 2	7 HITCH
G1	GLORIETTA 1	1 ROBOTS	2 SHAOLIN VS. EVIL DEAD		
		3 THE PACIFIER	4 BAHAY NI LOLA 2		
ATC	ALABANG TOWN CENTER	THX 1 ROBOTS	2 HOSTAGE	3 HITCH	
		4 THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	5 MILLION DOLLAR BABY		
ACC	ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 HITCH	2 ROBOTS	3 THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA	
		4 HOSTAGE	5		
GB1	GREENBELT 1	1 ROBOTS 11:30, 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30			
		2 SPANGLISH 11:20, 1:55, 4:30, 7:05, 9:40			
GB3	GREENBELT 1	THX 1 THE PACIFIER 1:05, 3:10, 5:15, 7:20, 9:25, 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	THX 2 MISS CONGENIALITY 2 1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:00, 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	3 CONFIDENCE 1:05, 3:10, 5:15, 7:20, 9:25, 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	
		4 SPANGLISH 1:00, 3:35, 6:10, 8:45, 11:20 GUARANTEED SEATS	5 ROBOTS 12:30, 2:30, 4:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 GUARANTEED SEATS		

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MTRCB Rating General Audiences

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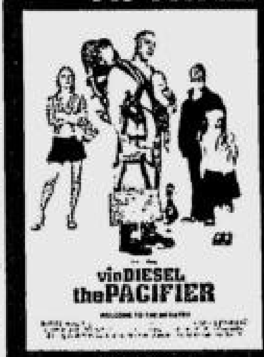

MTRCB Rating: G
MARCH 21, 22 & 23

Sandra Bullock
miss Congeniality 2
Armed and Fabulous
MTRCB Rating: PG-13
MARCH 22 & 23

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④ Bahay ni Lola 2

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⑥ Hostage
⑦ Robots

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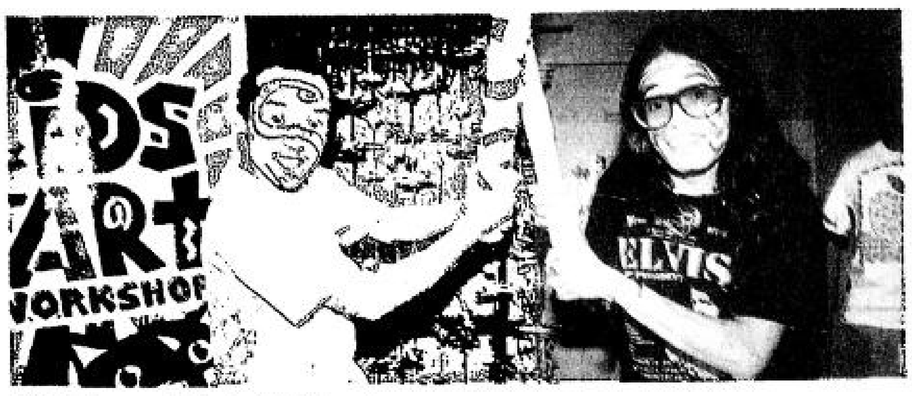

EPY Quizon and Tado host "Art Jam."

Educating Epy Quizon, art teacher

SENSITIVITY, creativity, compassion.

Actor Jeffrey Quizon says he's glad to help instill these qualities in children through his show, "Art Jam."

The show, from ABS-CBN Foundation's Educational TV Productions, starts its second season on April 2, 9 a.m.

According to this son of Comedy King Dolphy, the best part is that "Art Jam" is fun as much as it is educational.

Actually, he points out, he benefits from the show as well. The De La Salle University graduate, father of a 10-year-old boy, says: "I learn how to be an effective communicator."

Kids should spend time away from the Internet if they are to explore their artistic potentials, Quezon believes. "Art Jam," through three main segments—playtime, food trip and junk art—tells young viewers that nothing beats simplicity in doing anything.

"There is much joy in improving one's craft through one's own hands," says Quizon.

This season, Quizon has a new partner, Arvin Javier, known to TV buffs as Tado. "On-hand experience is the better, more effective, and more exciting avenue toward perfecting one's skills," says the comedian, who appears in several ABS-CBN shows.

"Epy and I want to develop children's fun side because this is one of the most

EPY / A26

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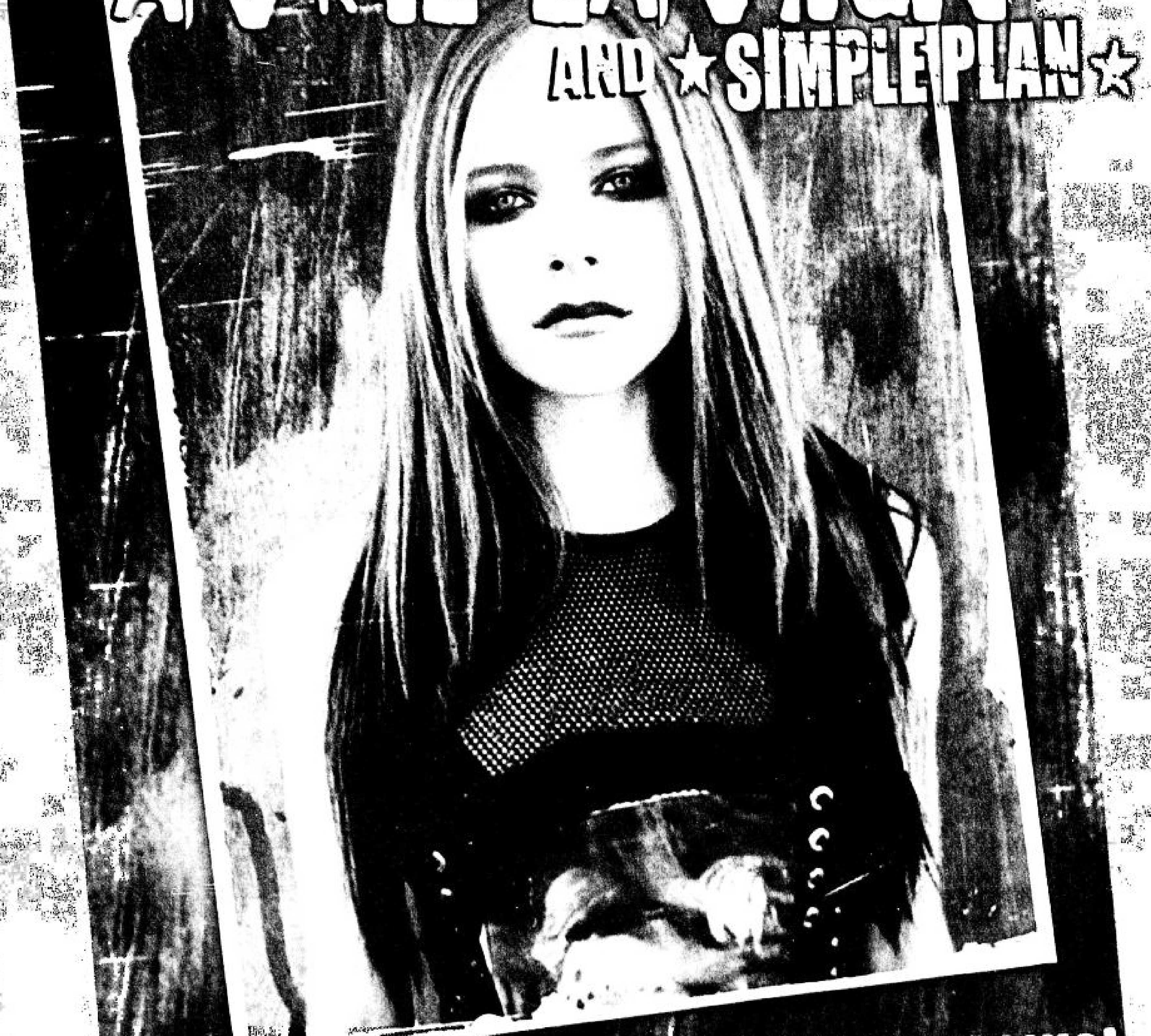

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Tales of courage

Tsunami survivor

CAROLINE: Wall of water

CAROLINE Wong, HBO Asia's marketing communications director, was in Manila recently to announce her company's offerings for the period from March to May, including the start of "Six Feet Under" Season 4 and three new HBO Original Movies.

But the exciting news took a back seat to Caroline's own story. The thirty-something, very lightly built and youthful-looking executive had just gone through an experience of a lifetime which the media guests wanted to hear more of than the subject at hand.

She had survived the killer tsunami. This is the story in her own words—"my personal testimony to the greatness of our Lord Jesus Christ."

God is good

I WAS involved in a conservation project on the tiny island of Koh Phra Thong in Thailand (two hours north of Phuket) when the tidal wave hit. It was an absolutely gorgeous day. The sun was out, the sea was calm.

Suddenly, the water was acting strange. I guess because none of us knew the signs, we just stayed on the beach and watched. The first wave was little, but the second one just kept coming. We ran for our lives. It seemed the wall of water, 15 meters high, was going like a million miles an hour and there was no way to outrun it.

I made it to a two-story building which collapsed shortly after, throwing everyone into the water. The current was unbelievably forceful. I was blessed to have been thrown onto a tree right before the wave swept out into the open ocean.

It took everything I had to hang on to that tree. I soon felt my legs and right hand slipping because the water was hitting me from all directions. I prayed and prayed . . . and prayed. This stopped just when my left hand was about to give up. I looked down and realized that something huge had gone through my leg because my thigh was split open.

There was so much stuff floating in the water, it was hard to imagine not getting cut up completely. When the water came down, those of us who made it hurried up a hill about 15 meters from where we were and started climbing. There was word that another wave was coming soon. We scaled that steep hill as fast as we could; there was no way we were going to lose the battle after having come so far.

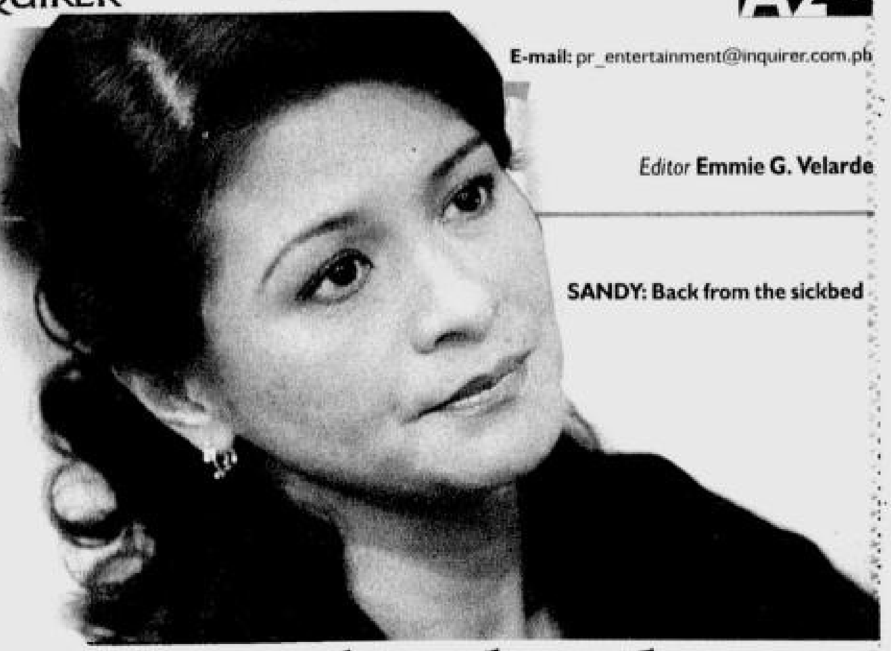
Once on top, about eight stories high up, we began a desperate search for our companions. A few of my teammates were badly injured. Two were missing [we found their bodies later].

Rescue

I saw a little girl, 12 years old, in critical condition. She had a wooden plank through her collar bone. It was all we could do to try to keep the wounded alive. A few who were truly courageous insisted on going down to the beach to look for other survivors, ignoring the threat of the next wave.

Miraculously, one person had a working cell phone. Thus, we managed to call for help, but rescuers could not get to us till noon the next day because the whole coast had been affected and the devastation so huge.

It was a tough, tough night—kids wailing for missing parents and parents for missing kids, no medicines or anything for the injured, etc. But we survived the night. The Thai Royal Navy got to us the next day via chopper. On my way to the chopper, four people came up to me one after the other and handed over my passport, plane tickets, house keys and credit card in that order—all that I needed to find my way home. They had found my things; and then they found me. A true miracle!



SANDY: Back from the sickbed

Healing hands

By Ernie Pecho
Contributor

"COMMON people are much easier to heal than celebrities," says Fr. Joel Ayala Faller of the Healing Church of Lucban, Quezon. "There are a lot of skeptics in show biz, and that makes my job difficult."

Even so, movie stars have found their way to Fr. Joey's church. Many of them have helped finish the construction of the church and a healing center, even as they asked that their good deed be not made known to the public.

TALES/ A2-2

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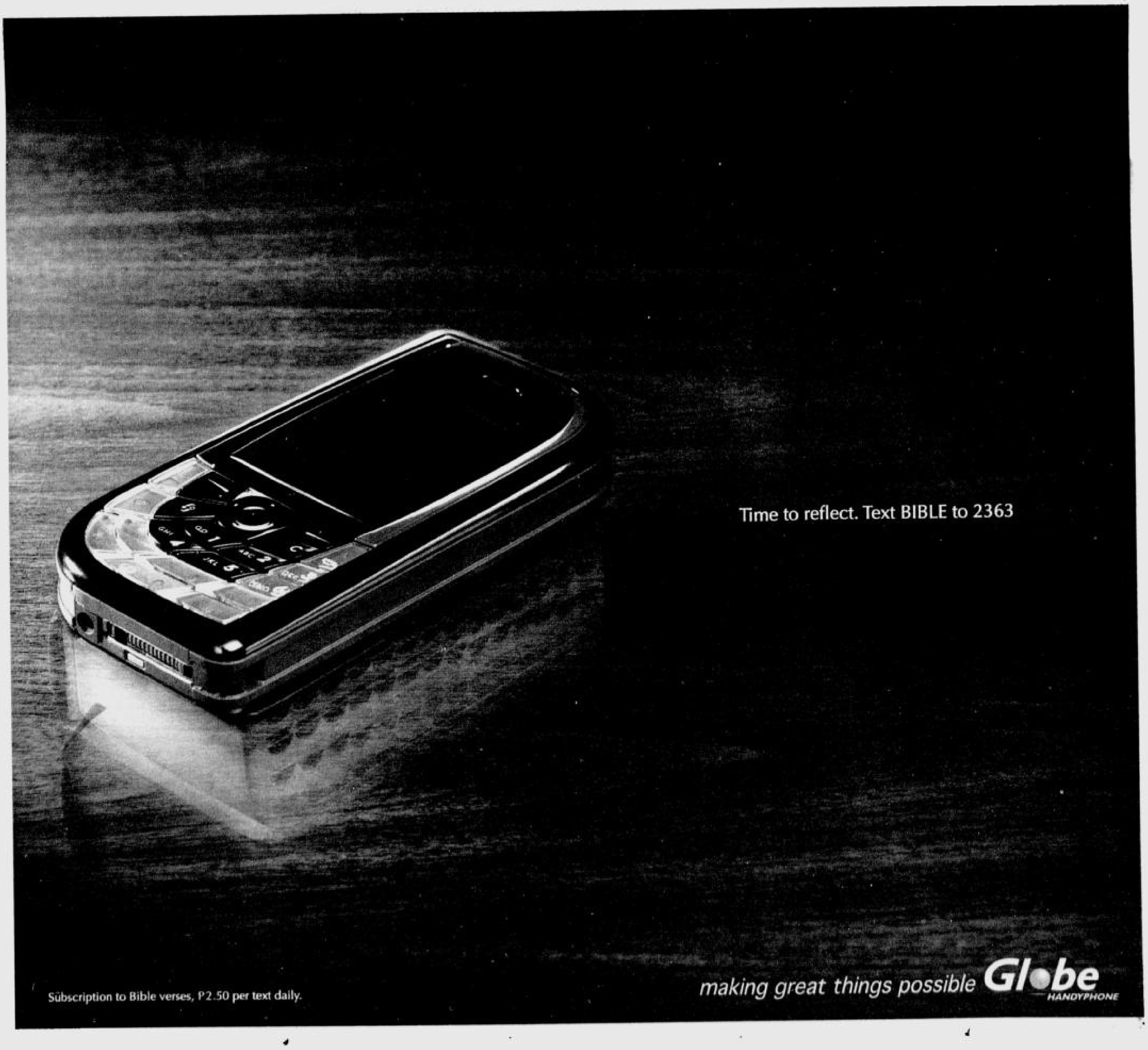

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Heaven is a concert hall

By Dr. Tonton Eltanal-Pascual

MY idea of heaven is a concert hall where I get to sing all the songs I love to sing, in the highest notes I could possibly reach, to an audience of thousands. Well, I got a glimpse of that on Thursday last week.

But first let me tell you of the journey to that unforgettable night. It started in late December when my husband Odie and I discovered a lovely Italian restaurant called Nicotina. Given that the name of the place is a derivative of nicotine, and that I despise the smell of cigarette smoke, I was very reluctant to even just check out the place. I imagined a crowded bar full of cigarette-smoking patrons, plus blaring sounds over which no two people could possibly have a decent conversation.

So I was very pleasantly surprised at what I saw upon entering the place. It was a beautiful garden-type restaurant with very high ceilings and table settings so cozy and romantic, you could be inside your own living room. Yet in the background would be playing beautiful old songs on a grand piano or, later in the evening, cool and soothing chill-out music rhythmically in tune with spectacular lighting such as one finds in concerts.

CHEER FACTOR

The second time my husband and I went to Nicotina, there were just the two of us ... and there was Ike, the pianist, playing "Someone to Watch Over Me." Since there was no one else around who could possibly get annoyed if I sang a song or two, I asked the waiter if I could jam with the pianist. He said that was OK, so I went up the stage and did it.

One hour and several requests from the waiters later, the restaurant owner, Richard Tann, entered and sat somewhere I couldn't see him listening. It turned out the waiters had phoned him and said someone "good" was singing.

March 10, 2005. On this day, Richard said, I would be the guest performer in Nicotina's monthly show, with Jacqui Magno and Pat Castillo, former members of the Circus Band like himself. He was so confident that the audience would appreciate my singing. I had a truly hard time believing this at first. The only real, serious singing I had done at that point was in the shower. (After all the lounges and bars that my husband and I have seen, I can say that, to date, my shower has acoustics that only Nicotina can match.) I say "real" because only in my shower do I sing "Nessum Dorma" in all its glory and all the might that I can muster.

But came *the* day and there I was, set to perform in an actual show in front of an actual audience! Now, anyone who has watched Jacqui, Pat and Richard perform knows that they are all gifted artists: Jacqui, with her amazing and impeccable jazz style; Pat, the ultimate lounge singer with her sultry voice; Richard, the elegant crooner of wonderful romantic ballads.

Individually, they're a great pleasure to watch; together, they can make magic happen on stage. Imagine my chagrin when Richard told me I wasn't going to be the first act.

Applause

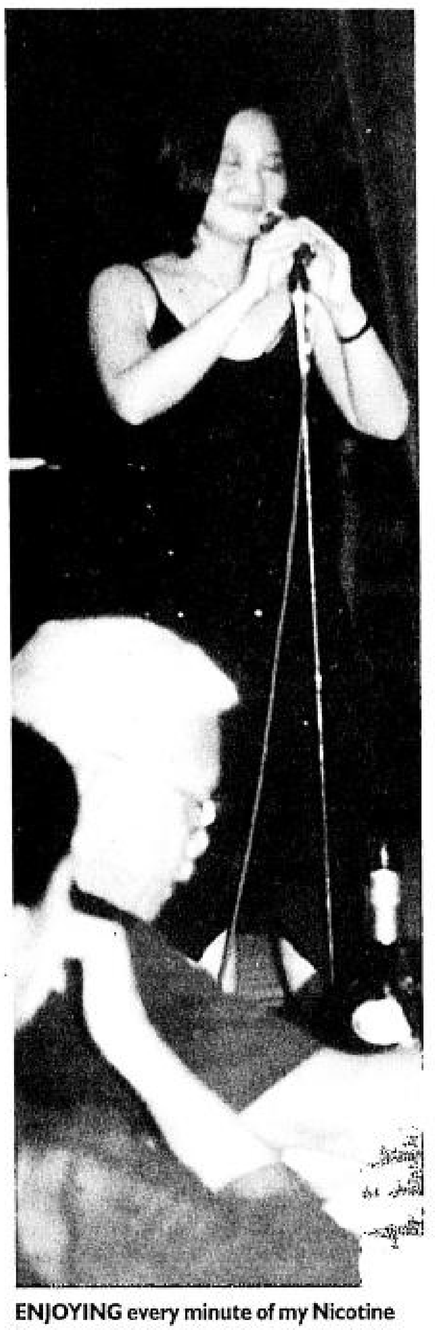
It was all I could do to pay only half a mind to them as they sang away and made the audience laugh with their witticisms.

It was almost like watching three children at play, having all the fun in the world. And I, waiting backstage, mind crammed full with Italian lyrics, could barely keep myself together.

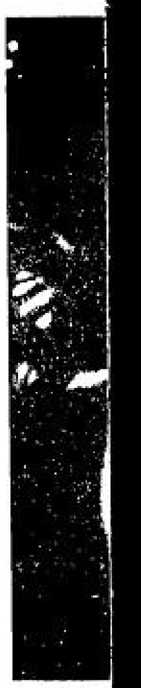
All too suddenly came my turn to take center stage. I thought: "What the heck am I doing here?" But after my first song, Sarah Brightman's version of "Time to Say Goodbye," the audience clapped so hard, I couldn't believe my ears. This was actually happening! I was singing something I loved to sing, and people were applauding! This went on for four more songs, including a never-heard-of duet with Richard that thankfully the audience liked despite its unfamiliar tune.

Now, I am my worst critic—in everything. So I'll be honest with you and say that I sang only 80 percent as well as I usually did in my shower. I had told Richard jokingly during one of the rehearsals that he should put a shower on stage and the sound of splashing water in the background so I'd be more at home and not be nervous!

But that night, the sound of applause and the sight of smiling faces, including my



ENJOYING every minute of my Nicotine heaven.



RICHARD

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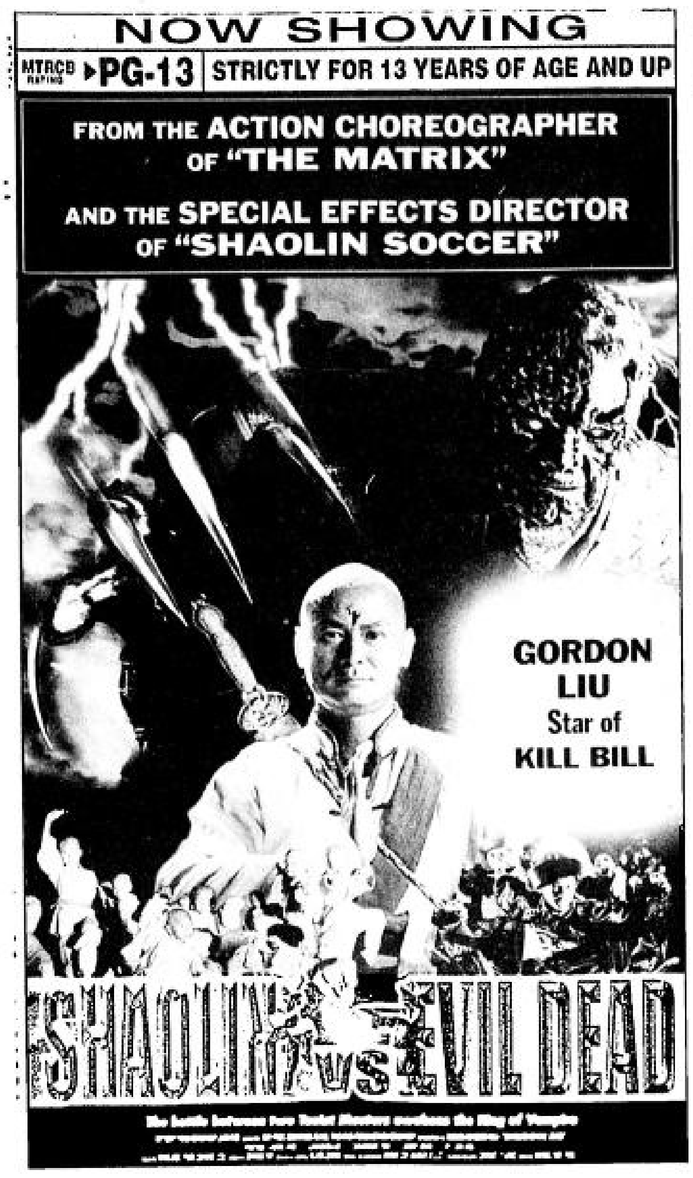
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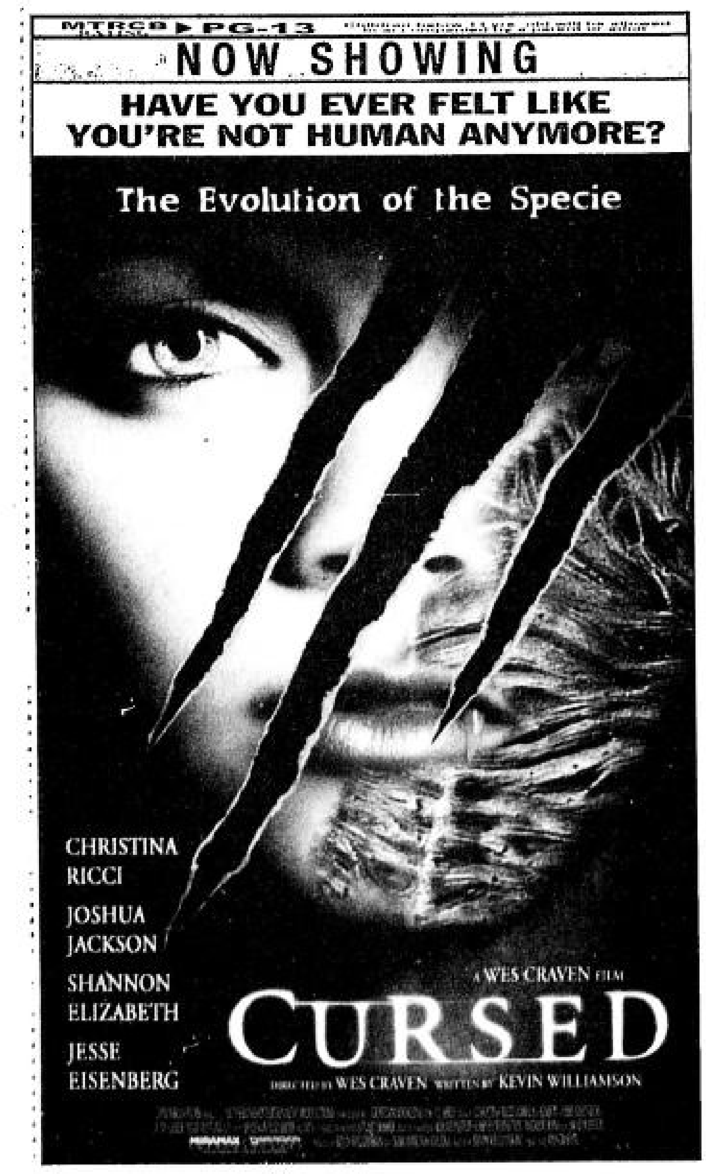
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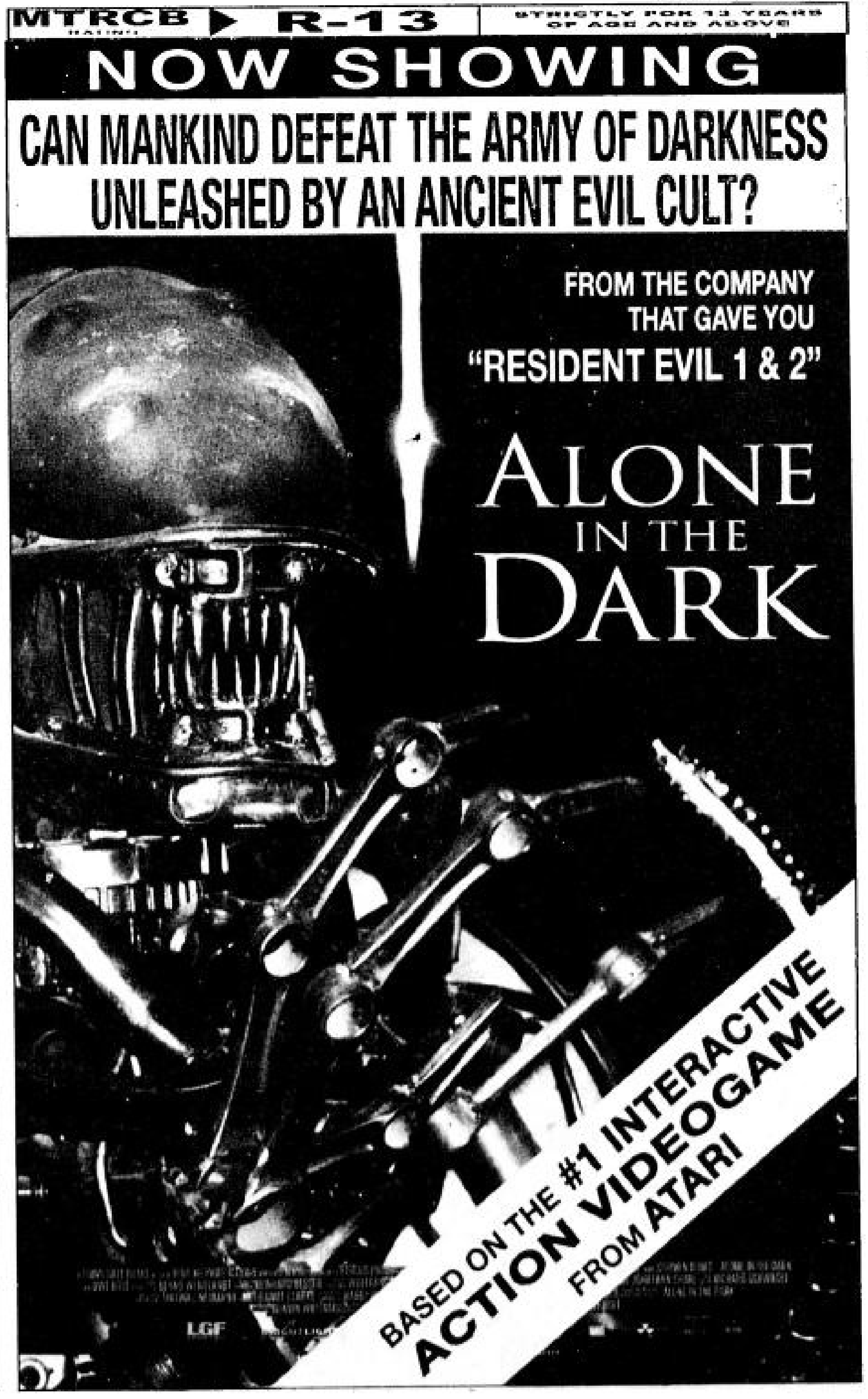
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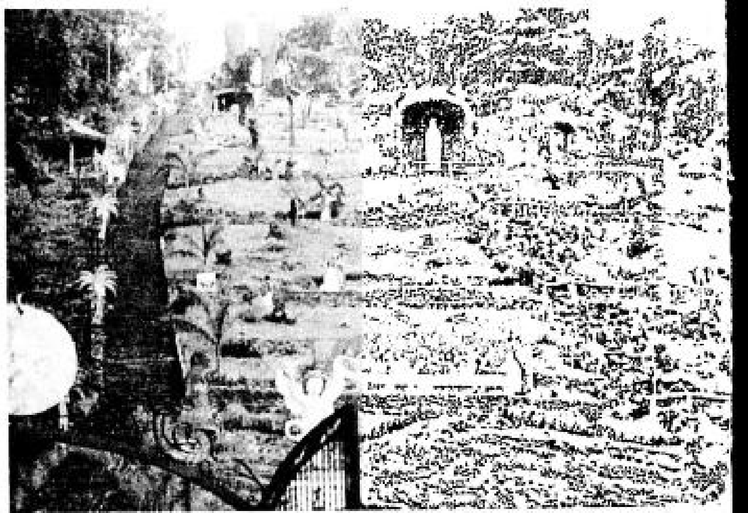

THE GROTTO in Lucban, built by believers, show biz

Tales of coura

From page A2-1

This week, the church is expecting visits from both benefactors and beneficiaries from all over the country, thanks in large part to testimonies of famous people liberated from myriad afflictions. Among them is actress Sandy Andolong.

In 2003, Sandy experienced depression, causing her to feel physically ill. In July of that year, she was confined in a hospital for dehydration caused by constant vomiting. The doctors diagnosed kidney trouble, lacerations in the large intestines, inflamed uterus, a polyp in the gall bladder, and abnormal lactation caused by a disorder of the pituitary gland.

Sandy was told she needed to undergo major surgeries. She turned to prayer.

Her friend Candy, wife of actor Rez Cortez, convinced her to go to Lucban to meet Fr. Joey for a pray-over and healing session. During the session, Sandy fell to the ground. "Slain in the spirit," was how it was explained to her.

"I felt a surge of energy from Fr. Joey's fingers as I held onto him," Sandy clearly recalls. "That energy entered my entire system. It
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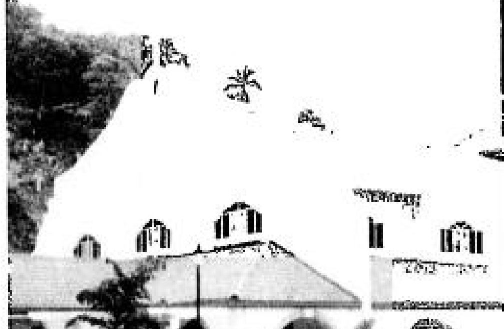

THE HEALING church

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Tann, the poised professional, and me, the flustered amateur

There was no one else around to get annoyed if I jammed with the pianist, so I asked the waiter if I might sing a number or two

Mela Lapitan, and my cousin, infinitely uplifting and encourag- almost hear them say, "Go, Ton, ud of you." Slowly then, it started t, my singing to the wonderful rowd. I even got comfortable ell them during one of the breaks did surgery and if they let me do cts, I would sing to them for free. nging would be for free, I said; the y would have to pay for.

ncore number (you'd better be- he end of my set, I had cho- old song that my mother-in- me on a very old piece of . I proudly told the audience mily of my mother-in-law, naldo Pascualo from Gener- avite, had owned "Banda which played the Philippine nthem the first time ever in history.

he song, imagine if you can: e clapping and to the tune Libis ng Nayon"! Cheering st those who belonged to the of Levi Celerio, but also hap- nd middle-aged people.

Playback

Days later, my resident from Ospital ng Maynia showed me a video clip of that last number from his phone. Wow! The crowd did get wild. I absolutely loved that the audience was enchanted by such a song:

"...Kung ang hanap mo ay ligaya sa buhay
Sa libis ng nayon doon manirahan
Taga-bukid man may gintong kalooban
Kayamanan at dangal ay kabukiran..."

I truly hope I can see that happen again many more times in this lifetime. I do know, though, that the scene will play over and over again in my afterlife.

Late that night in bed, my husband whispered, "Goodnight, Singer." Certain that I would never quit my day job, I corrected him: "It's Dr. Singer." We drifted off to sleep smiling.

(Dr. Tonton Eltanal-Pascual is an opthalmologist. As a singer she would like to be known as Antoine Pascual. But she would also like her fans to know that she's still better at doctoring.)

---

celebs' latest refuge

ge

vas such a soothing and com- sation. After just a few mo- t better—comforted."

whispered to her: "Don't wor- he Lord will heal you."

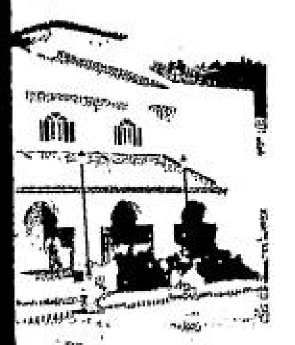
husband, actor Christopher ggested that she take a vaca- ook his advice and went to isco, California. When she and underwent her quarterly eckup, all her symptoms but ey trouble were gone.

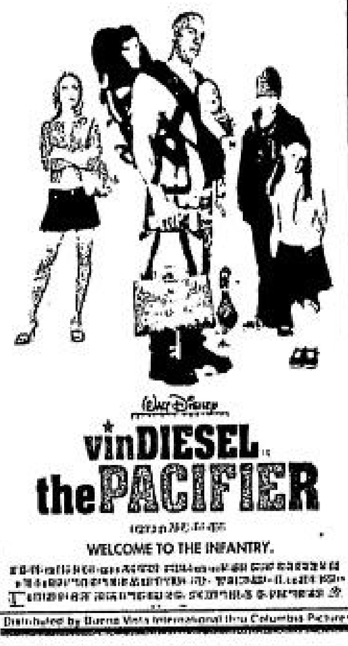
take long for this to disap- she's well and back at work ies.

, actress Beverly Vergel group of entertainment writ- Healing Church. What used to rine is now an impressive edi- mountains.

ft side of the church is the Via Grotto of Healing and Way of , all of 292 steps, leading to a tue of the Ascending Christ.

ow much the construction e ministry's friends, Fr. Joey and said: "We should not ccounting of expenses on done for God's greater glory."

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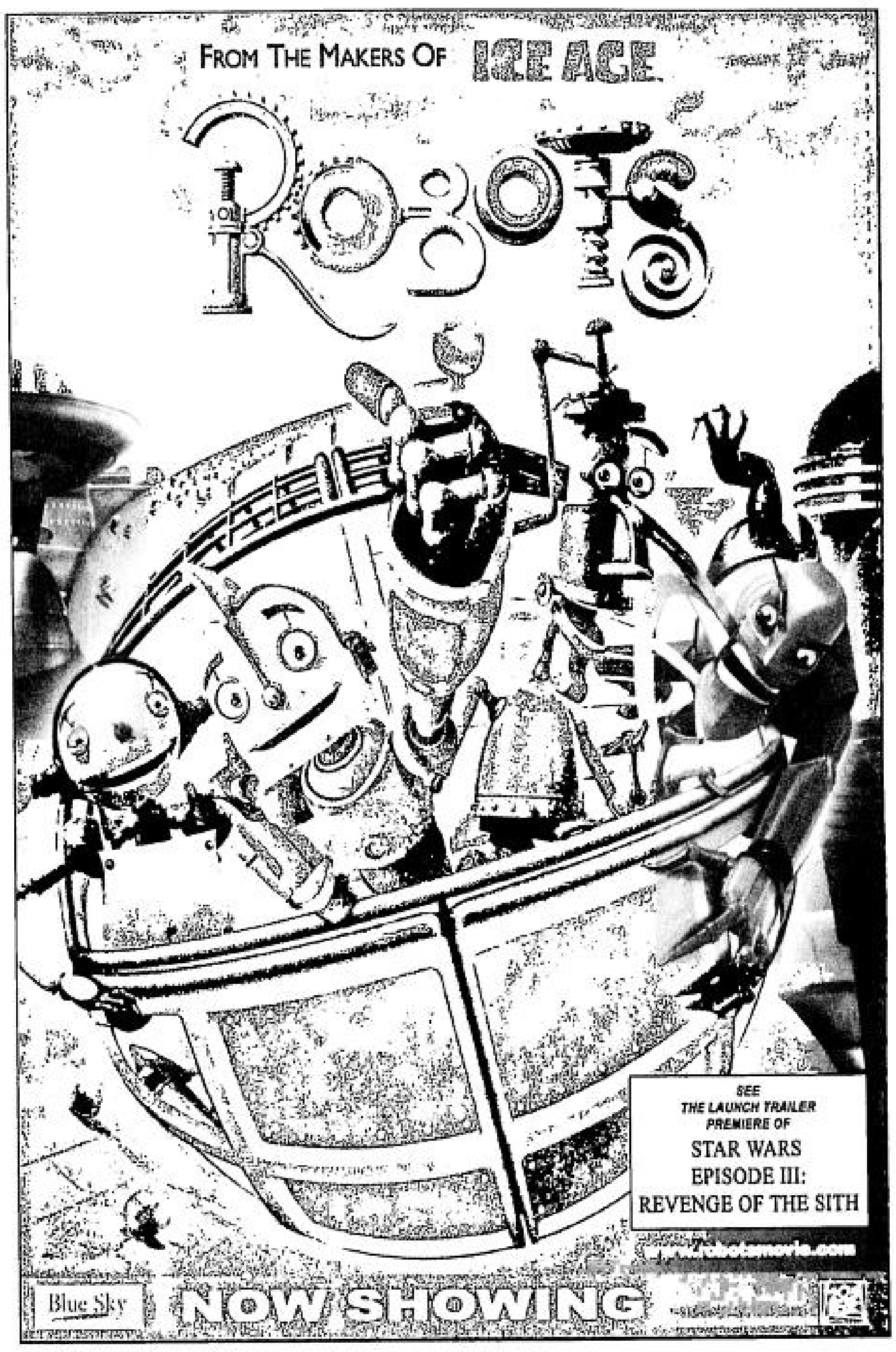
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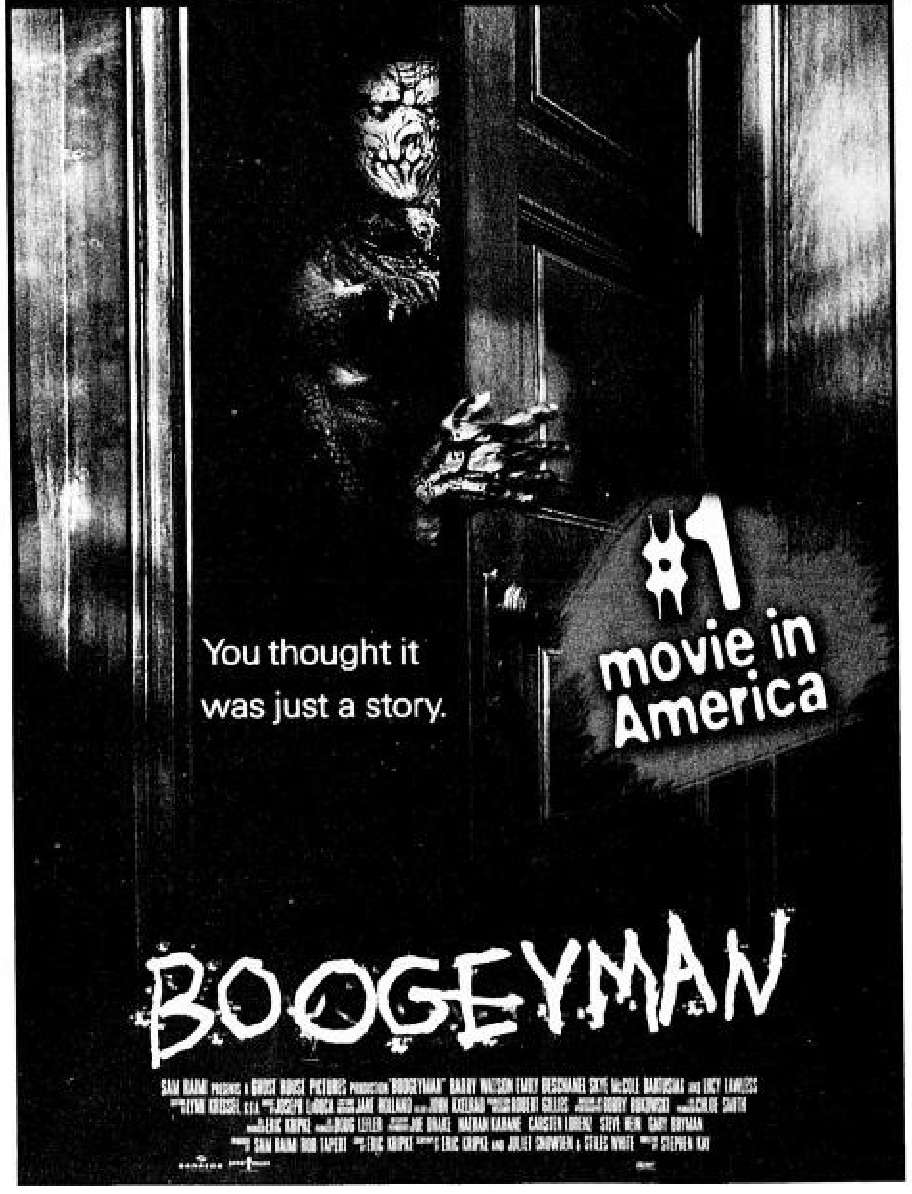
COMING SOON
MTRCB Rating ▶ PG 13 "Parents are strongly cautioned in bringing along kids below seven due to some scenes that might stress their sensitivities".
From SAM RAIMI - the director of SPIDERMAN


You thought it was just a story.
#1 movie in America
BOOGEYMAN

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100% TRUE-TO-LIFE HOSTAGE CRISIS
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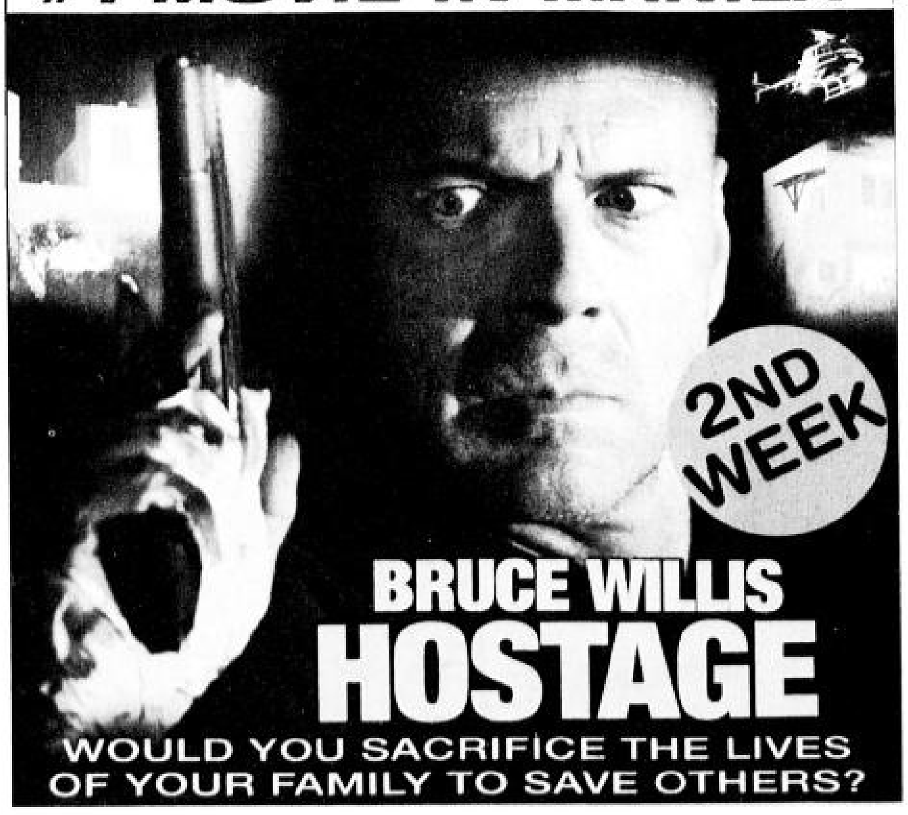
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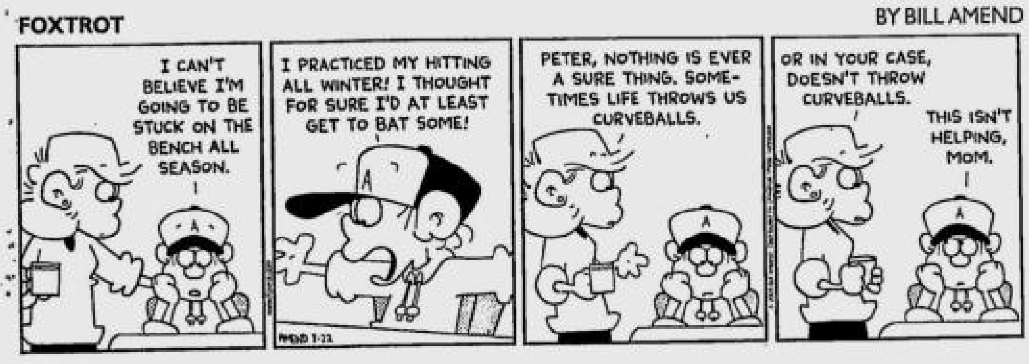
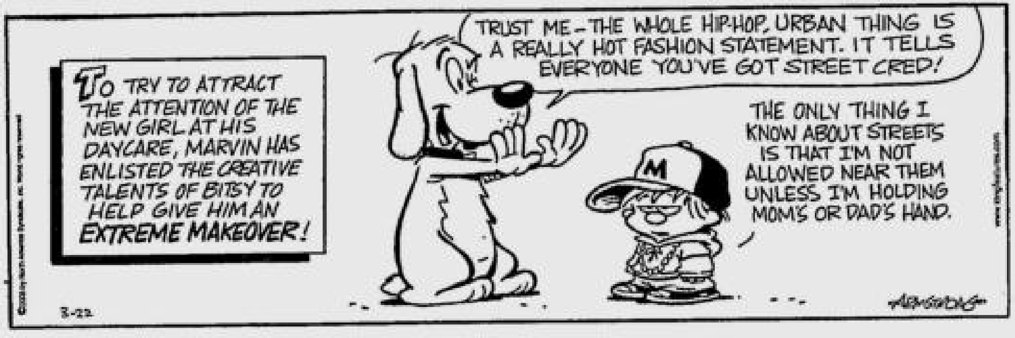
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M GOING TO BE STUCK ON THE BENCH ALL SEASON.
I PRACTICED MY HITTING ALL WINTER! I THOUGHT FOR SURE I'D AT LEAST GET TO BAT SOME!
PETER, NOTHING IS EVER A SURE THING. SOMETIMES LIFE THROWS US CURVEBALLS.
OR IN YOUR CASE, DOESN'T THROW CURVEBALLS.
THIS ISN'T HELPING, MOM.

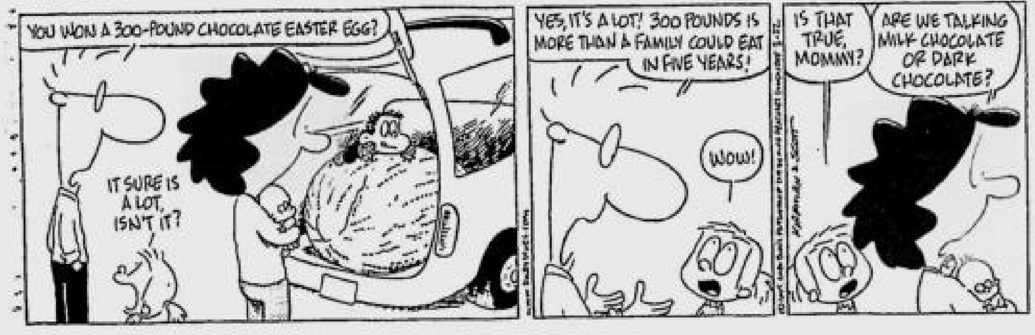
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


TO TRY TO ATTRACT THE ATTENTION OF THE NEW GIRL AT HIS DAYCARE, MARVIN HAS ENLISTED THE CREATIVE TALENTS OF BITSY TO HELP GIVE HIM AN EXTREME MAKEOVER!
TRUST ME – THE WHOLE HIP-HOP, URBAN THING IS A REALLY HOT FASHION STATEMENT. IT TELLS EVERYONE YOU'VE GOT STREET CRED!
THE ONLY THING I KNOW ABOUT STREETS IS THAT I'M NOT ALLOWED NEAR THEM UNLESS I'M HOLDING MOM'S OR DAD'S HAND.
3-22

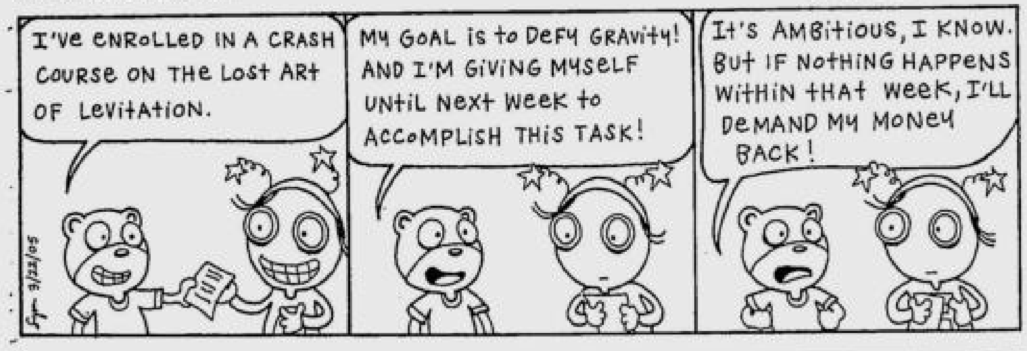
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


YOU WON A 300-POUND CHOCOLATE EASTER EGG?
IT SURE IS A LOT, ISN'T IT?
YES, IT'S A LOT! 300 POUNDS IS MORE THAN A FAMILY COULD EAT IN FIVE YEARS!
WOW!
IS THAT TRUE, MOMMY?
ARE WE TALKING MILK CHOCOLATE OR DARK CHOCOLATE?

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


I'VE ENROLLED IN A CRASH COURSE ON THE LOST ART OF LEVITATION.
MY GOAL IS TO DEFY GRAVITY! AND I'M GIVING MYSELF UNTIL NEXT WEEK TO ACCOMPLISH THIS TASK!
IT'S AMBITIOUS, I KNOW. BUT IF NOTHING HAPPENS WITHIN THAT WEEK, I'LL DEMAND MY MONEY BACK!
3/22/05

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're confident, enthusiastic and dynamic! You believe in yourself. Sometimes this is obvious; sometimes you're quiet about it. You accomplish much because you're well-directed and focused. You have qualities of the classic hero within you. You will always fight the good fight. This is a year of change, perhaps as significant as whatever took place in 1996.

Birthdate of: William Shatner, actor; Reese Witherspoon, actress; Lena Olin, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Today, fair Venus enters your sign. This makes you charming and diplomatic, and extra-friendly to everyone in the next month. What a wonderful piece of luck! You win, and so do others.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Any moments of solitude that you can squeeze into your life will be much appreciated. Try to slip away into nature. Read a book; take a walk; enjoy the scenery.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Relations with friends and groups will improve greatly in the month ahead. Accept all invitations. Extend a few to others yourself. Be friendly!

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Bosses, VIPs and parents think very highly of you in the next four to six weeks. You're in the right place at the right time saying the right thing to the right person.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Travel for pleasure—anywhere—will delight you in the month ahead. You want to expand your horizons! You also want to learn something new and exciting. Sign up for a course if you can.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Others are very good to you now and in the next few weeks. People might give you gifts. Others will do favors for you. Still others will lend you things or let you use something they own.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Today, Venus moves opposite your sign. This greatly improves all your closest relationships, partnerships and friendships. The next few weeks are an excellent time to mend broken fences.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Co-workers will be unusually supportive and cooperative in the month ahead. Now is the time to put forth your suggestions and ideas. People will listen to you!

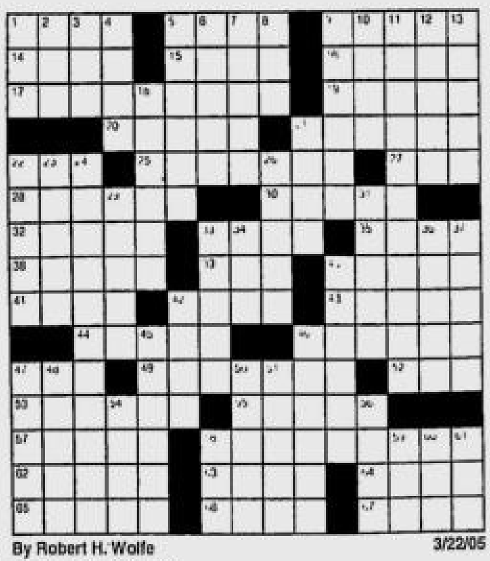
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): The month ahead is a fabulous time for a vacation or travel for pleasure. Romance, playful activities with children and the arts all shine!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Go ahead with redecorating ideas that you have for your home. Buy something that makes where you live more attractive and cozy.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Many things will happen in the next few weeks to make you see just how much love there is in your daily life. People truly care for you!

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You can expect to spend money on yourself and loved ones in the month ahead. You want to buy frivolous, pretty things.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Robert H. Wolfe
North Woodmere, NY

3/22/05

ACROSS
1 Scoffs of contempt
5 Fable
9 Person
14 Shaving-cream additive
15 Last bio
16 Novelist Calvino
17 Subsequent to a class?
19 L.A. pro
20 1971 Matthau film
21 Volatile anesthetics
22 Acme
25 John Lennon's widow
27 Garden tool
28 Piercing cry
30 Singer Lauper
32 Coral island
33 __ Raton, FL
35 Philosophies
38 Puzzle type
39 Vichy water
40 Ground-cover herb
41 Kind of poker
42 Teri of "Tootsie"
43 Of a type of dancing
44 Smashing Monica
46 Noisy sleeper
47 Lanka lead-in
49 Wild
52 All the same
53 Truthful
55 Pink shade
57 Skillful
58 Class in the tropics?
62 Catch a film again
63 Room extension?
64 Boot tips
65 Tough question
66 Golf pegs
67 Lone guy

DOWN
1 Sheepish comment
2 TV alien
3 Like a stolen car
4 Search for
5 Kind of drum
6 Where to be taken?
7 Stone: pref.
8 Afr. nation
9 Hotelier Conrad
10 Zion National Park's state
11 Reach a class in time?
12 Olds model
13 Scandinavian
18 Kansas City team
21 "Orinoco Flow" singer
22 Winter Palace rulers
23 Double quartet
24 In support of a class?
26 Happen
29 Steer clear of
31 Painter Rivera
33 Beauty's beau
34 Rowing-crew member
36 "Fibber __ and Molly"
37 Electrical woe
40 Barbarian
42 Lady's beau
45 Sheen
46 Twilled fabrics
47 One-half-step higher
48 Calgary Stampede, e.g.
50 Perceptive
51 __ Carlo
54 Type of foil
56 Why don't we?
58 High-velocity fluid stream
59 Acquired
60 Roll-call vote
61 NYC arena

Monday's Puzzle Solved

S	C	A	M	P		E	W	A	N		W	R	A	P
L	A	B	O	R		P	I	C	A		H	O	L	E
O	N	E	M	O	M	E	N	T	P	L	E	A	S	E
W	E	T		T	I	E	D			A	R	D	O	R
			B	E	N		B	E	A	M	E			
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R	O	U	T	E		H	G	T	V		S	A	L	E
A	R	T		S	K	A		I	S	P		P	A	W
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F	O	U	R	D	O	O	R	H	A	R	D	T	O	P
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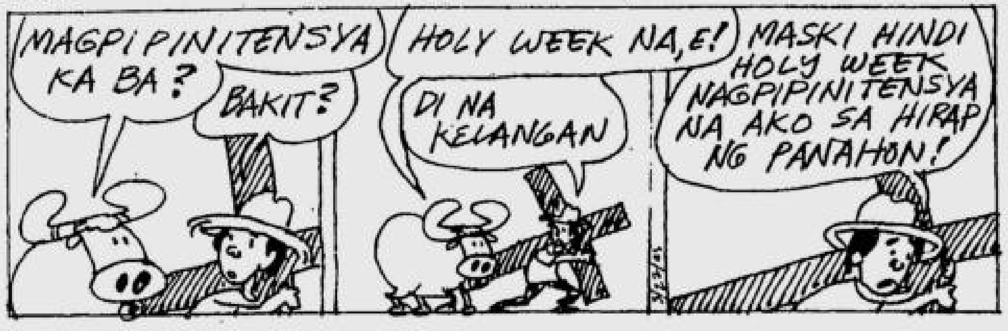
GASFAR
fuel saving tips
CHECK CONDENSER
Inspect condenser for any abnormality. Worn out condensers must be replaced.
A public service message of
Department of Energy
Philippine Institute of Petroleum

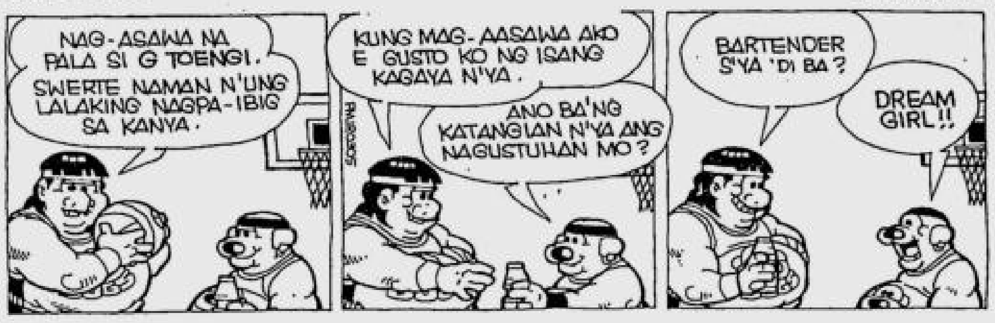
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


MAGPIPINITENSYA KA BA?
BAKIT?
HOLY WEEK NA, E!
DI NA KELANGAN
MASKI HINDI HOLY WEEK NAGPIPINITENSYA NA AKO SA HIRAP NG PANAHON!

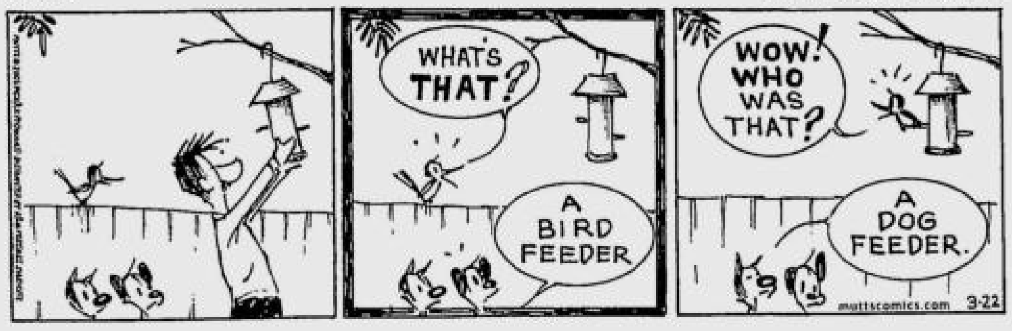
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


NAG-ASAWA NA PALA SI G TOENGI. SWERTE NAMAN N'UNG LALAKING NAGPA-IBIG SA KANYA.
KUNG MAG-AASAWA AKO E GUSTO KO NG ISANG KAGAYA N'YA.
ANO BA'NG KATANGIAN N'YA ANG NAGUSTUHAN MO?
BARTENDER S'YA 'DI BA?
DREAM GIRL!!

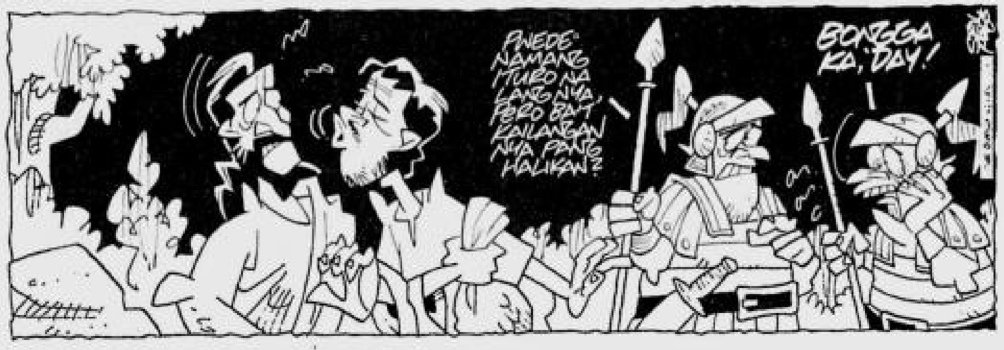
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


WHAT'S THAT?
A BIRD FEEDER
WOW! WHO WAS THAT?
A DOG FEEDER.
muttscomics.com 3-22

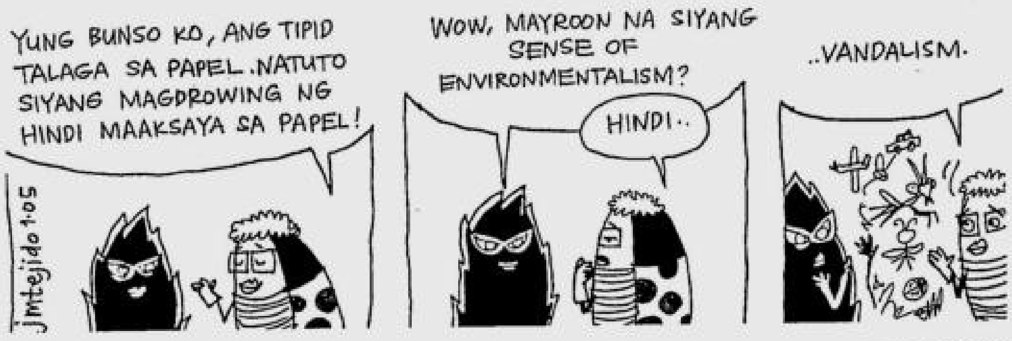
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


PWEDE NAMANG ITURO NA LANG NYA, PERO BA'T KAILANGAN NYA PANG HALIKAN?
BONGGA KA, DAY!

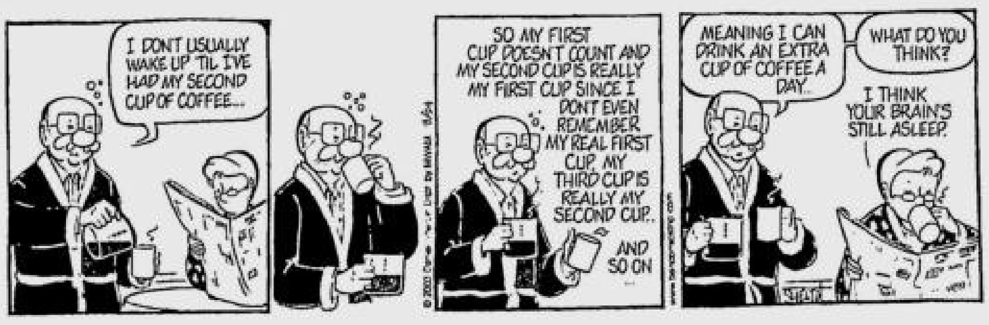
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


YUNG BUNSO KO, ANG TIPID TALAGA SA PAPEL. NATUTO SIYANG MAGDROWING NG HINDI MAAKSAYA SA PAPEL!
WOW, MAYROON NA SIYANG SENSE OF ENVIRONMENTALISM?
HINDI..
..VANDALISM.
jmtejido 1.05

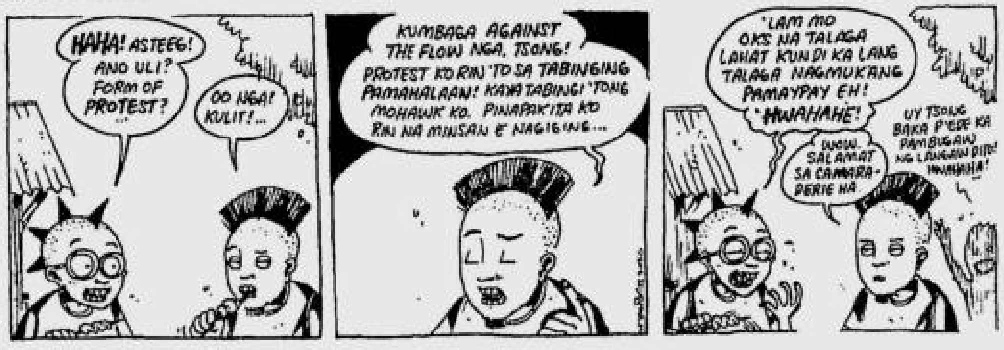
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


I DON'T USUALLY WAKE UP 'TIL I'VE HAD MY SECOND CUP OF COFFEE...
SO MY FIRST CUP DOESN'T COUNT AND MY SECOND CUP IS REALLY MY FIRST CUP SINCE I DON'T EVEN REMEMBER MY REAL FIRST CUP. MY THIRD CUP IS REALLY MY SECOND CUP... AND SO ON
MEANING I CAN DRINK AN EXTRA CUP OF COFFEE A DAY...
WHAT DO YOU THINK?
I THINK YOUR BRAIN'S STILL ASLEEP.

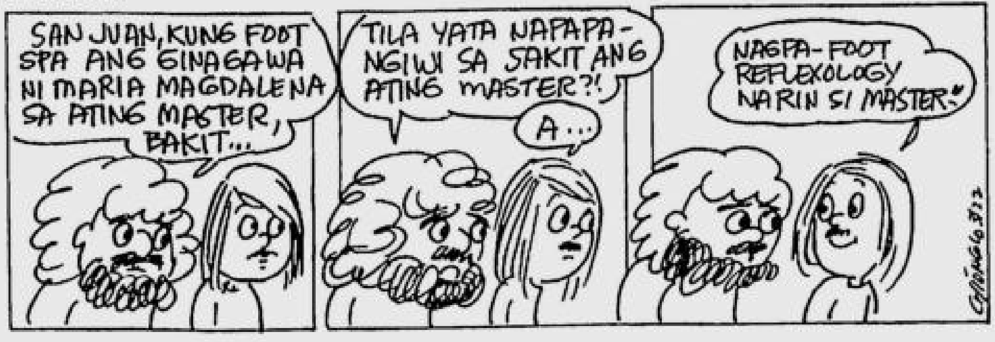
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


HAHA! ASTEEG! ANO ULI? FORM OF PROTEST?
OO NGA! KULIT!...
KUMBAGA AGAINST THE FLOW NGA, TSONG! PROTEST KO RIN 'TO SA TABINGING PAMAHALAAN! KAYA TABINGI 'TONG MOHAWK KO. PINAPAKITA KO RIN NA MINSAN E NAGIGING...
'LAM MO OKS NA TALAGA LAHAT KUNDI KA LANG TALAGA NAGMUKANG PAMAYPAY EH! *HWAHAHE!*
WOW.. SALAMAT SA CAMARADERIE HA
UY TSONG BAKA P'EDE KA PAMBUGAW NG LANGAW DITO! HWAHAHA!

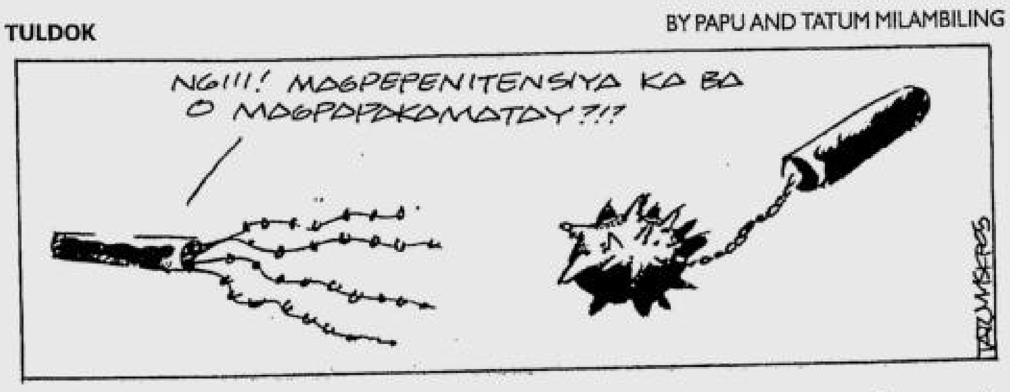
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


SAN JUAN, KUNG FOOT SPA ANG GINAGAWA NI MARIA MAGDALENA SA ATING MASTER, BAKIT...
TILA YATA NAPAPANGIWI SA SAKIT ANG ATING MASTER?!
A...
NAGPA-FOOT REFLEXOLOGY NA RIN SI MASTER!

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


NGI!!! MAGPEPENITENSIYA KA BA O MAGPAPAKAMATAY?!?

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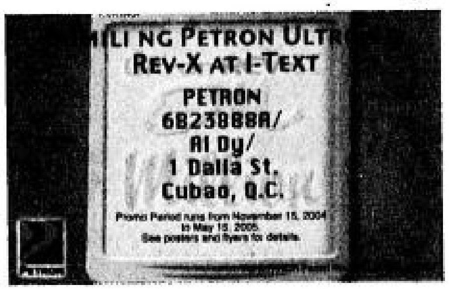
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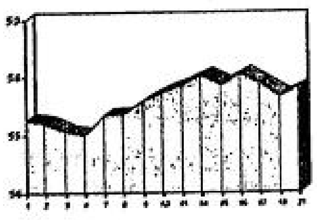
IMF urges BSP to raise interest rates

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE



P 54.180 = $ 1
As of 5 p.m., March 21, 2005

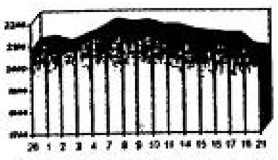
Y 105.15 = $ 1
As of 5 p.m., March 21, 2005

GOLD: $439.5
per ounce Hong Kong, March 21, 2005

STOCK MARKET

Shares end lower ahead of long Easter break

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



SHARES closed down yesterday, failing to sustain gains made early in the session as investors played safe and lightened holdings ahead of the long Easter break, traders said.

The benchmark 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index ended down 16.50 points, or 0.8 percent, at 2,033.78, adding to Friday's 2.4-percent loss.

Financial markets will close Wednesday afternoon for the Easter holiday.

Newly listed Manila Water was the most actively traded stock. It managed to end unchanged at P6.90.

Weighing on the index was blue-chip Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., which fell 0.7 percent to P1,430, in step with the 0.9-percent loss suffered by the company's American Depository Receipts on Friday.

Other active stocks were SM Prime, down 3.8 percent at P7.70; Ayala Corp., down 1.3 percent at P7.80; and Manila Electric "B", lower by 3.5 percent at P28.

Bucking the market downturn were Semirara, up 11 percent at P40, and First Holdings, up 3.6 percent at P57.50 on bargain hunting.

All sectoral indicators finished lower, except the banks and financial services subindex, which ended higher on gains in Bank of the Philippine Islands, up 0.9 percent at P57.50, and Philippine National Bank, higher by 4.3 percent at P36.50.

Decliners led gainers 60 to 22, while 45 stocks were unchanged.

Security has been tightened across the country to thwart retaliatory attacks after the deaths of some leaders of the al-Qaida linked Abu Sayyaf terror group in a siege at a high-security Manila jail last week. **AP**

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE INTERNATIONAL Monetary Fund wants the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to start raising interest rates to curb the uptrend in consumer prices, projecting that inflation would again overshoot the official ceiling of 5 to 6 percent this year.

The IMF said in a statement that its directors were "concerned that persistence of above-target inflation for a prolonged period might lead to an upward revision to inflationary expectations."

Last year, the inflation rate averaged 5.5 percent, also exceeding the ceiling of 4 to 5 percent, but the BSP kept its key policy rates steady as it believed monetary policy would not have been effective in arresting supply side shocks.

The Fund also said the near-term outlook for the Philippines was clouded by the uncertain external environment and that the rapid 6.1-percent growth in 2004 was unlikely to be sustained given the slowing global demand in the information technology sector and rising interest rates.

"There are uncertainties on both the upside and downside, depending on oil price movements, the strength of world demand and weather conditions [which affect agriculture production]," the IMF said.

The IMF board agreed that supply shocks had been the root cause of the country's failure to meet the inflation target in 2004—led by a jump in meat and fish prices, followed by the surge in world oil prices and the recent hike in power tariffs.

But the Fund pointed to a number of signs that price pressures were spreading.

"A number of directors supported the approach of the BSP to continue to closely monitor inflationary pressures—in particular, weigh the evidence for inflation having become more generalized—and to take prompt action as needed," the report said.

"Many other directors, however, took the view that the balance has already tipped, and that an increase in policy rates is required to guide inflationary expectations down," it said.

The report lamented that despite the strong economic growth in 2004, mainly driven by a recovery in exports and consumption, inflation had risen and unemployment remained high.

The Fund nevertheless welcomed the efforts being made by the administration to lay out a comprehensive package of reforms aimed at addressing the country's long-standing problems in the fiscal, power and banking sectors as well as in reducing its high debt levels.

"Notwithstanding these welcome steps, directors cautioned that, with the major part of the reform agenda still unfinished, vulnerabilities arising from the country's large external debt and financing requirements remained high," the report said.

"Thus, the economy remains susceptible to external shocks, especially changes in market sentiment and increases in global interest rates

IMF/ B3

Homegrown coffee firm expands overseas

By Ronnel W. Domingo

HOMEGROWN coffee firm Figaro Coffee Co. is considering to go public as it pushed for its expansion in China, the Middle East and Southeast Asia, according to its chief executive.

Figaro CEO Chit Juan said in a press briefing the company was looking at an IPO within a year and a half or two.

"But we have to get our house in order first before we could do that," Juan said.

At the same time, she said Figaro was laying out up to $600,000 or about P10.8 million for two branches in Shanghai, China, and a third in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Aside from that, Juan said Figaro was also planning to put up stores in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia.

Figaro has about 50 stores nationwide, of which at least 23 are company-owned while the rest are franchises.

In the second half of 2004 alone, Figaro opened eight stores in Sta. Rosa, Laguna; Magsaysay Center in Manila; Zeta 1 Building in Makati; Royal Arcade along Commonwealth Avenue; SM City Garden along North Avenue in Quezon City; Brittany in Sucat, Muntinlupa City; Club SixFifty Sports Center in Libis, Quezon City, and Eastwood City.

Figaro was established in 1993 based on the concept of a complete store where Filipinos could get their coffee and coffee-making paraphernalia.

Juan said Figaro's drive to boost its overseas presence was also a realization of the firm's goal of being a Filipino coffee company that could compete internationally as well as promoting local and global awareness of Philippine coffee.

Figaro offers 12 flavors of coffee made of "only the best, handpicked Philippine Arabica [beans] from the best coffee farms in the country."

According to the Department of Trade and Industry, the country's coffee exports rose in volume by 130 percent to 1,703 metric tons in 2004 from 740 tons amid production cutbacks among traditional growers.

The DTI said Philippine coffee exports were reaching a wider market due to the production cutbacks in traditional exporters like Brazil at a time when world prices were high.

In previous years, the combined coffee production of 45 countries posted a 14.5-percent decline to 102.5 million bags in 2003 from 119.95 million bags in 2002, according to the London-based International Coffee Organization.

The decrease resulted in an uptrend in world coffee prices, which benefited minor exporters like the Philippines, the DTI said.

Coffee exports—in the form of processed or instant coffee, roasted or ground coffee, and green beans—are shipped to Japan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Palau, Greece and Papua New Guinea.

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Manila Water dammed by falling market

MR. BEARBULL

Ron Nathan

TWO WEEKS ago, I missed an article and last week concocted an alibi so absurd that I am sure that nobody believed a single word of it, nor were they meant to. Still, it was amusing. At least I hope so. The truth was that I did write an article but was advised not to submit it as it was so bearish.

I knew that the PHISIX was horrendously overbought because the degree of risk exceeded 98 on a scale of 0-100. This indicated that the only direction the market could possibly go was down. Every blue chip looked overpriced and the inflation figures were certain to be at a record level due to the price of petrol, now rising weekly.

The unemployment figure was up last year at 11.3 percent and a further 15.4 percent were under-employed. Growth in the last quarter of 2004 slowed to 5.4 percent and this quarter seems likely to be affected by El Niño, according to the weather forecasters.

Third liners, not traded in a long time, were going limit-up—four in one day—and there was a spate of IPOs lined up. All these factors pointed to the market topping out.

I was also convinced that the Senate and Congress would not agree on a VAT package before the Easter 3-week recess after having its pork cut by 40 percent.

My conclusion was so negative that the Editor, who was completely unmoved by the sad fate of the Million Dollar Baby, pleaded with me not to publish it lest I cause panic selling. I was also depressed about my sex life, which is now an annual body search at the airport and an occasional pickpocket.

I did, however, tell subscribers to get out of the market the following morning. As it happened, the index opened 6-points higher before closing 10-points lower, so they were able to get out right at the top of the cycle. I was disappointed that the market only drifted that week. But last week, matters came to a head when the Senate disappeared to the United States to watch the Pacquiao-Morales fight and the Abu Sayyaf threatened to blow up malls and churches during Holy Week.

Last Friday, the market finally caved in and fell 50 points to 2,050, which was 120 points below the level at which I issued a SELL signal.

I received a number of emails and phone calls from happy subscribers, but I felt sorry for those people who managed to get Manila Water, expecting to sell the shares at P8. It opened at P7.60, but rapidly plummeted to P6.80, closing at P6.90. It should recover in due course.

The President is calling a 3-day special session on March 31 to impress the lawmakers about the urgency to pass the VAT bill as it is the most important of the 8 bills.

In the end, they will comply in principle, but I doubt whether she will get what she is asking for. In all probability, she will end up with another watered-down bill that is better than nothing, but will not necessarily impress foreign investors.

After months of hot money coming into the country buying stocks, bonds and pesos, foreign investors have started to rethink their assessment of the Philippines and the stock market and the currency is reflecting this. There is still time to stop an outflow of funds, but the lawmakers have to act quickly.

I was pleasantly surprised to learn that SMIC was four times oversubscribed as local investors showed little interest in a stock selling on P/E of 25, when its main asset in terms of book value, SMPH, is selling on a P/E of less than 15. Obviously foreign brokers decided to pay up for a good stock with a high degree of liquidity. It is the largest issue since Petron.

I am quite worried about Semirara, as I recommended it not long ago. I gave it a target of just over P50, which is reached on days 1 and 2, so readers should have taken their 40 percent profit at the opening. The rapid fall of P6.50 back to the IPO price is made worse by the fact that the parent company, DMC, fell 0.40 to P3.50. Over the past month, DMC has dropped from P6.10 to P3.50, one of the worst performing issues in the market.

I cannot see how a coal mining company can be doing badly when coal is selling at a very high price, much higher than last year. I am beginning to wonder about the accuracy of the profit forecasts given by DMC to Macquarie. The 2004 results should be known by now as it is almost the end of March and all other companies have reported their annual results.

DMC should reaffirm these forecasts. If they do, then SCC is dirt cheap on a P/E of 4.5 and should recover quickly. If they do not, then they have some explaining to do. ING was by far the largest seller of over 1 million shares last Friday. But on Monday, they bought 500,000 and crossed 850,000. The price recovered to P40.

A long overdue bond market will be starting up very shortly and the public will be able to deal in modest amounts of Treasury stocks. At present, we are almost the only stock exchange that does not have a fixed income market.

Dealings start on Tuesday in SMIC, probably around the offer price of P250. Nearly all of it was subscribed overseas and I doubt whether anyone bought it for a quick profit. Nevertheless, there will be huge block sales and cross sales, so turnover could reach an all time high.

Our research department has dissected the prospectus and have calculated that the quoted stocks are worth P86 billion, and the unquoted holdings in Shoe Mart, SM Mart and others are worth an additional P82 billion. Adding in some other assets, they calculate the net asset value to be P333 per share so that the IPO price represents a 25 percent discount.

Their advice was to subscribe if you were prepared to hold long term, but they did not recommend it to short term punters. I think this is sound.

My wife unexpectedly became amorous, but I said, "We can't because it's Lent." "Oh," she said. "To whom and for how much?"

She is off to her village to visit her Lolo, who will be celebrating his 100th birthday on Sunday. All his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren will be there.

Although his sight and hearing are not too good, he still has all his faculties, which is more than I can say about a certain college professor. I am not going because I cannot stand the journey by bus, jeep, tricycle, banca and carabao. Besides, they don't have air-conditioning, and I cannot stand the heat. Still, I think that reaching 100 is a wonderful achievement. *mrbearbull@hotmail.com*

Consunji eyes stake in Maynilad

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE CONSTRUCTION firm DM Consunji Inc., Metro Pacific Corp. and the Delgado Family, former owners of Isla Telecommunications Inc. (Islacom), have signified their interest to each acquire stakes in Maynilad Water Services Inc.

According to Maynilad sources, the groups have inquired about the water utility's financial report and current cash flows.

Also, the investors are especially keen to learn about Maynilad's new tariff rate, which has been approved recently, the source said.

Maynilad's new tariff rate took effect in January.

Since then, the water firm's customers have been paying an additional P30.19 per cubic meter.

The tariff would generate an additional revenue of P2.5 billion to P3 billion for the company, a study of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System indicated.

Although the company lacks the capability to acquire new commercial loans due to its pending rehabilitation, Maynilad's tariff adjustment "will ensure that the capital expenditure program of the company will be in place," an MWSS official explained.

The source added that the interested companies might even acquire the equity abandoned by the Lopez Group, which the Philippine government, through the MWSS, would have to assume.

According to government sources privy to the negotiations involving the Lopez-owned Maynilad, the government-led MWSS and the creditor-banks, the west zone concessionaire has also offered board seats to its creditors in order to regain financial viability.

The MWSS is on top of Maynilad's list of creditors with an exposure of P8 billion representing unpaid concession fees.

The company's other creditors, accounting for the remaining P10 billion in obligations, include Credit Agricole, Indosuez Merchant Bank Asia Ltd., Citibank NA, Barclays Bank PLC and BNP Paribas, Equitable PCI-Bank, Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. and the Development Bank of the Philippines.

Under Maynilad's proposal, the MWSS would be given control of about 60 percent of the west concession area.

Under a proposed amendment to the Concession Agreement, the company to be controlled by the MWSS would be called the New Maynilad.

Four government appointees and three representatives from the bank creditors will sit in Maynilad's seven-member board of directors.

Benpres Holdings and its foreign partner, Ondeo Philippines Inc., will remain as minority shareholders.

Maynilad has proposed a debt-for-equity swap deal with its creditors to settle some P18 billion in maturing obligations.

Maynilad's bank creditors have refused a debt-for-equity swap deal and opted to get paid within the next seven years or so.

PSE posted ₱47.3-M income as of Feb. '05

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

BOOSTED by new initial public offerings, the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday reported an income of P47.3 million as of end-February, exceeding the full-year income in 2004 of P19.8 million.

In a report to stockholders, PSE president Francis Lim said that operating revenues for the first two months already hit P79.3 million, about 57 percent of last year's figure.

The hike in PSE's income was primarily due to the initial public offerings of Manila Water Company and SM Investments Corp., and increased trading at the local bourse.

Lim said the previous PSE board was so optimistic about this year's results that it already declared a cash dividend of P5 a share.

Ayala-led East Zone water distributor Manila Water Co. Inc. was the first IPO for the year, with its shares closing at P6.90 per share on opening day last week.

MWCI raised P4.8 billion from the offering of 745.33 million shares at P6.50 apiece.

SM Investments Corp. (SMIC) of retail magnate Henry Sy, on the other hand, will debut today.

It is seen as the biggest IPO since 1996 when oil firm Petron Corp. sold shares to the public.

SMIC will raise P28.75 billion ($530 million) from the sale of 115 million of its shares.

About 105 million of these shares are new shares, while 10 million shares are held by existing shareholders.

The total shares to be offered make up about 21 percent of the company's total outstanding shares.

PSE is working on the listing of more shares on the stock exchange to expand the capital market and further improve its finances.

Last year, PSE recorded P137.6 million in operating revenues, up 23 percent from P111.7 million the previous year.

Net income, on the other hand, reached P19.8 million, an increase of 84 percent from the 2003 net income P10.7 million.

PSALM opens bid for Calaca plant

By Abigail L. Ho

THE POWER Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. has invited interested firms to bid for the 600-megawatt (MW) Batangas coal-fired thermal power plant in Calaca.

This is the second big Napocor generation plant to be placed on the auction block after the sale of the 600-MW Masinloc coal-fired power plant in Zambales last year.

In a bid invitation published yesterday, newly-installed Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said the bidding will be limited to firms that would submit their letters of intent by 5 p.m. of April 8.

Upon submission of their LOIs, prospective investors should sign a confidentiality agreement, and pay a non-refundable participation fee of $1,000 to get the bidding package.

This package includes all the details of the auction, and the bidding procedures.

The due diligence study of the power plant is scheduled from April 4 to May 13, with a pre-bid conference set for April 14.

The deadline for submission of bids has been set for noon of May 18.

As with the other auctions of generating plants, Napocor requires all potential bidders to post a bid security equivalent to 10 percent of their total bid price, in the form of an irrevocable letter of credit from a PSALM-accredited reputable local bank.

The bid security of the winning bidder will be substituted with a performance security, which will guarantee "prompt, faithful and complete performance of its obligations" under the transaction.

For this auction, PSALM will be using the two-envelope bidding system, where the financial and technical bids will be submitted separately.

PSALM has so far sold five operational Napocor plants-four hydroelectric and one coal-fired.

These are the 35-MW Talomo plant in Davao for $1.37 million, the 1.6-MW Agusan plant in Bukidnon for $1.53 million, the 1.8-MW Barit plant in Camarines Sur for $480,000, the 0.4-MW Cawayan plant in Sorsogon for US$410,410, the 1.2-MW Loboc plant in Bohol for $1.42 million, and the 600-MW Masinloc coal-fired plant in Zambales for $561.74 million.

Napocor expects to complete the privatization of its plants by April next year.

Saudi Aramco won't sell Petron stake

SAUDI Arabian Oil Co. has no plans to sell its 40-percent stake in the Philippines' largest oil refiner Petron Corp., visiting Saudi Oil Minister Ali al-Naimi said on Monday.

Al-Naimi, who is on a three-day visit to the Philippines, made the comment after consumer groups and some local legislators asked the government to buy back Saudi Aramco's stake in Petron so it can cap domestic oil prices.

Philippine oil companies do not need government approval to raise pump prices of their oil products if crude prices shoot up in the world market or if the peso falls against the dollar.

"We are an investor and we like to continue to be a major investor in the Philippines," Al-Naimi told reporters after meeting with Philippine energy officials.

The Philippine government sold 40 percent of Petron to Saudi Aramco in 1994 and a small portion to the public. It retained a 40 percent stake in the oil firm. Saudi Aramco currently supplies up to 90 percent of the oil requirement of Petron. *Reuters*

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of March 21, 2005)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	6,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	28.5	28.5	28	28	231,300
Bank of the Phil. Islands	57	57.5	57	57.5	191,700
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	48	48	48	48	10,700
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.75	0.78	0.75	0.78	3,270,000
International Exch. Bank	18.75	18.75	18.75	18.75	76,100
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	37	37	36	37	48,200
Phil. Bank of Comm. A	66	66	66	66	600
Philippine National Bank	38.5	38.5	35	36.5	156,900
Security Bank Corp.	29	29.5	29	29.5	100,400
Union Bank of the Phil.	29.5	30	29.5	30	21,800
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Manulife Financial Corp.	2530	2530	2530	2530	390
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.06	1.08	1.06	1.06	261,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	150	150	150	150	1,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1720	1720	1720	1720	290
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	16.5	16.5	16	16	260,900
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.26	1.3	1.26	1.26	2,767,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	905	905	895	900	22,600
Ipeople Inc.	5	5	4.95	4.95	63,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.055	3,800,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.06	2.06	2.04	2.04	31,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.5	3.6	3.45	3.45	1,865,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1475	1475	1425	1430	156,910
Ivantage Corp.	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	250,000
Philweb Corp.	0.02	0.021	0.019	0.02	157,400,000
POWER, ENERGY & OTHER UTILITIES					
Manila Electric Co. A	20	20	20	20	39,900
Manila Electric Co. B	28.5	28.5	28	28	1,052,300
Manila Water Co. Inc.	7	7.2	6.9	6.9	59,189,000
Petron Corp.	4	4	3.9	3.9	1,595,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.52	1.52	1.52	1.52	197,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.92	1.92	1.8	1.8	62,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.78	1.78	1.78	1.78	38,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	8	8	8	8	47,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.66	0.66	0.65	0.65	110,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	100,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	3.65	3.7	3.65	3.65	681,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	3.5	3.5	3.2	3.2	3,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	26,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	15,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	28	28	27.5	28	49,200
Pancake House Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.16	1.16	61,000
San Miguel Corp. A	55.5	56	55.5	56	148,500
San Miguel Corp. B	81.5	81.5	80.5	81.5	235,400
Vitarich Corp.	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.3	1,000,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.01	0.011	0.01	0.01	81,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.011	9,000,000
Ayala Corp.	8	8	7.8	7.8	4,793,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.62	0.62	0.62	0.62	20,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	5.1	5.1	4.95	4.95	360,000
Alo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	1,800,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.16	2.18	2.16	2.18	100,000
APC Group Inc.	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	650,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	3,000,000
Aries Prime Res. Inc.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	22,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	25	25	24	24.5	9,900
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.18	0.18	820,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.14	1.2	1.14	1.16	14,923,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	300,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.25	1,810,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.46	0.47	0.46	0.47	1,210,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.55	3.9	3.55	3.65	2,560,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.66	1.66	1.64	1.64	3,190,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	10.25	10.25	10	10	75,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	55.5	57.5	55.5	57.5	902,600
Global Equities Inc.	0.115	0.12	0.11	0.115	5,350,000
House Of Investments Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	720,000
Ionics Inc.	1.64	1.64	1.6	1.6	88,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	3.75	3.75	3.65	3.65	334,000
Macroasia Corp.	2	2.06	2	2.06	130,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	5,000,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.62	1.62	1.6	1.6	1,418,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	170,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.51	0.54	0.51	0.53	13,060,000
Polar Property Holdings	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	36,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.28	0.3	1,510,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.35	0.35	0.34	0.34	400,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	220,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	280,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.18	0.185	0.17	0.17	2,090,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.34	0.34	740,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.62	1.62	1.62	1.62	75,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.14	0.16	0.13	0.16	1,830,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	1.38	1.42	1.3	1.3	6,865,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	1.04	1.04	0.99	1	3,037,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.54	1.54	1.48	1.5	4,334,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.33	0.35	0.27	0.3	14,910,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	9	9	8.6	8.6	2,168,000
Cityland Development Corp.	1.68	1.68	1.68	1.68	23,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.02	1.02	0.98	1.02	344,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.32	1,250,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.32	0.32	0.3	0.31	4,170,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	220,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.53	0.53	0.52	0.52	2,050,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.76	1.82	1.72	1.72	6,296,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	900,000
Gotesco Land Inc.B	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.145	400,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.76	600,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	150,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.19	0.19	0.18	0.19	1,750,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85	692,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	100,000
SM Development Corp.	1.74	1.8	1.74	1.8	119,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8.2	8.2	7.7	7.7	7,109,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	138,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	38,500,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	5.9	5.9	5.8	5.8	97,000
Benguet Corp. A	7.5	8	7.5	8	50,000
Benguet Corp. B	20	20	20	20	3,100
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	3.1	3.1	3	3	21,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.38	0.38	0.37	0.38	2,410,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.43	0.43	0.41	0.41	4,080,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.017	0.018	0.017	0.018	150,400,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.024	0.025	0.024	0.025	62,700,000
Omico Corp.	0.008	0.0085	0.008	0.008	836,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	1.16	1.16	1.16	1.16	40,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	1.42	1.42	1.38	1.38	2,499,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	38	41	38	40	3,047,200
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.3	0.32	0.3	0.32	140,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	8,800,000
Interport Res.	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	34,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	8,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	7,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	20,000,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	2.8	2.9	2.8	2.9	80,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.2	0.205	0.19	0.195	15,470,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	20,000

DISCLOSURES

TRANS-ASIA Oil and Energy Development Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 12, 3 p.m. at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel, Makati Ave., Makati City. Record date for the determination of shareholders entitled to notice of and vote at the meeting is March 11.

***

ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. will hold an investors and analysts' meeting on March 31, 3 p.m. at the Training Hall B, 13F ELJ Communication Center, Sgt. Esguerra Ave., Quezon City.

***

ELECTED to the board of the **Philippine Stock Exchange Inc.** were Peter Favila as chair, Francis Ed Lim as president, Alejandro Yu as treasurer and Aissa Encarnacion as corporate secretary.

***

PHILIPPINE Long Distance Telephone Co. confirmed reports that its subsidiary, PLDT Global Corp., is engaged in preliminary discussion with potential partners in Singapore regarding a joint venture arrangement for the provision of mobile virtual network operator services. ***Compiled by Ray Leyesa, PDI Research***

CURRENCIES

March 21, 2005 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.750638	1.000000	54.2220
Japan	Yen	0.007169	0.009550	0.5178
United Kingdom	Pound	1.442576	1.921800	104.2038
Hongkong	Dollar	0.096257	0.128233	6.9530
Switzerland	Franc	0.644933	0.859180	46.5865
Canada	Dollar	0.624595	0.832085	44.1173
Singapore	Dollar	0.462073	0.615574	33.3777
Australia	Dollar	0.594753	0.792330	42.9617
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.991241	2.652731	143.8364
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.200170	0.266667	14.4592
Brunei	Dollar	0.460655	0.613685	33.2752
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000080	0.000107	0.0058
Thailand	Baht	0.019482	0.025954	1.4073
UAE	Dirham	0.204383	0.272279	14.7635
Euro	Euro	1	1.332200	72.2345
Argentina	Peso	0.257730	0.343348	18.6170
Brazil	REAL	0.277039	0.369072	20.0118
Denmark	Kroner	0.134256	0.178856	9.6979
India	Rupee	0.017236	0.022962	1.2450
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.197563	0.263193	14.2709
Mexico	New Peso	0.067268	0.089614	4.8591
New Zealand	Dollar	0.557184	0.742280	40.2479
Norway	Kroner	0.122860	0.163674	8.8747
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012644	0.016844	0.9133
South Africa	Rand	0.124950	0.166459	9.0257
Korea	Won	0.000747	0.000995	0.0540
Taiwan	NT Dollar	0.024207	0.032248	1.7486

RP foreign debt eased to $54.8B in end-2004

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINES' total foreign debt, dominated by public sector accounts, dropped by 4.44 percent to $54.8 billion as of end-December from $57.4 billion a year ago, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported yesterday.

Compared to a quarter ago, the country's external debt likewise fell by 1.37 percent from $55.6 billion at end-September 2004.

The decline in the debt stock was achieved as some principal liabilities were retired. Both public and private sectors recorded net repayments during the year, which meant that principal payments exceeded new loan availments, BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said.

These repayments negated the large upward foreign exchange revaluation adjustments in December brought by the weakening of the US dollar against other major currencies that comprised the debt stock such as the Japanese yen and the euro.

"The continuing acquisition of Philippine international debt paper by Philippine residents also caused a further reduction of the debt stock," Buenaventura said.

When residents buy foreign-denominated Philippine bonds, these are now counted as part of domestic rather than foreign debts.

The country's debt stock remained heavily biased toward medium- to-long-term (MLT) accounts, which accounted for nearly 91 percent of the total. These loans, which had original maturities of more than one year, had a weighted average maturity of 17 years.

Public sector loans had a longer average maturity of 20 years compared to the private sector's average of 11 years.

Public sector loans accounted for 69 percent or $37.9 billion of the total debt stock, of which the national government and the cash-strapped National Power Corp. accounted for 67.5 percent and 10.9 percent, respectively.

Private sector liabilities, on the other hand, amounted to $16.9 billion, of which about a fifth consisted of bank borrowings.

"The country's creditor profile remained well-diversified, with official creditors comprising 46 percent of total; foreign holders of bonds and notes, 28.9 percent, and banks and other financial institutions, 20.4 percent," Buenaventura said.

In terms of currency mix, the country's external debt remained largely denominated in US dollars at 51.2 percent and Japanese yen, 30 percent.

Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima said the government was considering to diversify its credit risk by increasing the borrowings denominated in euro.

"If you look at interest rates in Europe, the rates there are lower. In fact our spread there is probably 50-75 basis points lower. It's another possibility of lowering our cost but that's something that we're still reviewing," he said.

Purisima said the finance department's view was that the euro's appreciation would not likely be sustained because from a trade standpoint, a stronger currency would make European exports less competitive in the long run.

IMF urges BSP to raise...

From page B1

and oil prices," it said.

Even with the benign global conditions, the directors warned that the Philippines could find it difficult to meet its large external borrowing needs "should the reform momentum falter."

The IMF reiterated the importance of a strong and front-loaded fiscal adjustment so as to send a strong signal to the markets about the government's commitment to tackle the fiscal problem.

In particular, the report cited the need to pass further tax measures with a clear and certain revenue yield and also called for reforms in other areas such as power and financial sectors as well as pension funds.

The IMF supported measures to raise the value-added tax (VAT) rate and repeal certain exemptions, saying these would allow an aggressive upfront reduction in the deficit as well as some additional spending in priority areas, including infrastructure and social programs.

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MOTOLITE SAGIP TIRIK

Kung masiraan, magpasagip sa Motolite Sagip Tirik, March 23-27, 2005 at participating Motolite Battery stations: NORTHERN LUZON - Baguio City (Caltex Station) • La Union, before Baguio (Caltex Station) • Capas, Tarlac (Caltex Station) • Olongapo-Gapan Rd., San Fernando (Caltex Station) • Olongapo-Gapan Rd., Guagua (going to Bataan) SOUTHERN LUZON - Tagaytay City (Caltex Station) • Calamba, Laguna, Brgy. Halang (Caltex Station) • San Pablo, Laguna (Caltex Station)

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Oil ticks down; Saudi ready to pump more crude

MELBOURNE—Oil prices ticked lower but held above $56 on Monday as the IMF forecast energy costs to stay high for at least two years, while top exporter Saudi Arabia said Opec could decide at any time to add more supply to the market.

US light crude for April delivery slipped 6 cents to $56.66 a barrel, less than $1 under the all-time peak at $57.60 struck last Thursday.

The April contract is due to expire at the close of business on Monday and May crude futures on the New York Mercantile Exchange shed 8 cents to $57.16 a barrel.

Saudi Arabia continued to reassure dealers that there were ample supplies to meet robust demand, saying it had 1.5 million barrels per day (bpd) of spare production capacity, which could be sent to the world market immediately if needed.

"We can go up a million and a half barrels per day," Saudi Oil Minister Ali al-Naimi said.

"The perception in the market is that there is not enough supply, which is untrue. There's plenty," Naimi said after meeting Philippine energy officials in Manila.

The kingdom, along with other members of the Opec producers' cartel, agreed last week to raise group output by 500,000 bpd to 27.5 million bpd with immediate effect to try to bring down prices from last week's records.

International Monetary Fund chief Rodrigo Rato warned on Saturday the world would have to live with lofty oil prices for at least the next two years because of strong demand and constraints in supply.

"We have to be aware that probably oil prices will stay high, although probably not at this level, in the next two years at least because of demand pressures—there is certainly very strong demand in the world for oil—and also because of certain supply constraints," Rato told reporters in New Delhi.

A TRIO of traders in the crude oil pit of the New York Mercantile Exchange make trades on a day that oil reached record high prices. Oil prices scaled fresh highs, forcing Opec to consider a second output increase just a day after its deal to raise supplies failed to halt crude's record-breaking advance. Contracts for light, sweet crude oil reached over $58.50 a barrel in intraday trading. REUTERS

He said world economic growth was expected to be more than 4 percent this year but could come in lower if oil stayed at current levels or climbed higher.

Investment bank Societe Generale said it had upgraded its forecast for oil demand growth by 2.5 percent to 2.1 million bpd and had raised its price estimate to $49.50 a barrel for US crude from $45.80.

Saudi Arabia's Naimi said the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries could decide at any time whether to raise formal output limits by a second 500,000 bpd if prices failed to fall below $55.

"The president just had a meeting a week ago, he is looking at it right now and the possibility of consulting with other ministers," Naimi said, referring to Opec President Sheikh Ahmad al-Fahd al-Sabah.

Opec output is close to a 25-year high and non-Opec producers are pumping at full tilt, leaving little leeway in the supply chain for any output glitch.

"The problem for Opec members and their ability to control prices is that they are now at a stage where the market is aware of how much spare capacity they have, and it is not a lot," said Mark Pervan, a Melbourne-based analyst at Daiwa Securities.

"So pledging more production just means less available supply from them." *Reuters*

US deficit bigger risk than terrorism, businesses say

WASHINGTON—The budget deficit has overtaken terrorism as the greatest short-term risk to the US economy, and concern about the current account gap is rising, a survey of American businesses released on Monday showed.

In the survey of 172 members of the National Association For Business Economics, 27 percent said the deficit or government spending was the largest short-term threat to the economy, up from 23 percent who thought so in August.

Terrorism dropped to second on the list, with 24 percent saying it was the biggest threat, down from 40 percent.

Those most concerned about the deficit in the current account—the largest measure of US trade with other nations—tripled, to 15 percent from 5 percent in August.

"Longer term, the costs related to the aging of the population dominate the challenges to sustaining economic growth. However, the panel is doubtful that this Congress will pass needed Social Security reforms," said David Wyss, chief economist at Standard & Poor's, who conducted the analysis for the report.

Concerns about energy costs rose to 11 percent from 6 percent, while just 6 percent saw inflation as the biggest short-term threat, down from 9 percent in August.

Unemployment, which was seen as the greatest risk at this time last year, was cited by just 2 percent of respondents—a clear sign of how the labor market has improved in the last 12 months.

The survey, taken between Feb. 28 and March 8, found US businesses had three nearly equal concerns about longer-term risks: health care, the aging population and the federal deficit.

The panelists also gave the Federal Reserve a strong vote of confidence, with 63 percent saying monetary policy is about right, up from 59 percent in August. *Reuters*

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Power Sector Assets & Liabilities Management Corporation

INVITATION TO BID

The Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation ("*PSALM*") Privatization, Bids and Awards Committee ("*Committee*") invites interested parties to participate in and bid for the privatization of the following:

600 MW Batangas Coal-Fired Thermal Power Plant located at San Rafael, Calaca, Batangas

(the "*Asset*"). The Asset is being privatized on an "*as is where is*" basis.

Interested parties are required to submit a Letter of Interest ("*LOI*") to PSALM which shall state the full name, address, telephone and fax number of the interested party, name of the principal contact, signed by an authorized representative, and with the latest audited financial statement attached to the submission. All LOIs must be received by PSALM at the PSALM Office, 2nd Floor, SGV II Building, Ayala Avenue, Makati City, not later than 5:00 p.m. on April 8, 2005 (the "*LOI Submission Deadline*"). Only interested parties that submit an LOI by the LOI Submission Deadline shall be allowed to participate further in the privatization of the Asset.

As a prerequisite to the receipt of the Bidding Package, interested parties shall execute a Confidentiality Agreement and an Undertaking pursuant to Section 78 of RA 9136, in the forms provided by PSALM, and pay a non-refundable fee in the amount of One Thousand U.S. Dollars (U.S. $ 1,000.00) (the "*Participation Fee*"). The Participation Fee shall either be in cash, manager's check or cashier's check. All bank charges, if any, shall be for the account of the interested party. The Confidentiality Agreement, Undertaking and Participation Fee must be received by PSALM on or before 5:00 p.m. of April 8, 2005 to entitle an interested party further participation in the privatization of the Asset.

The Bidding Package, which includes the bidding procedures, shall be issued during office hours (9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) from April 4, 2005 until April 8, 2005 at 5:00 p.m. (the "*Deadline*") at the PSALM Office. In accordance with the bidding procedures, only interested parties who have been issued the Bidding Package by the Deadline or a consortium which includes an interested party will be allowed to participate further in the privatization of the Asset.

The schedule of the bidding activities shall be as follows:

Due Diligence : April 4, 2005, to May 13, 2005
Pre-bid Conference : April 14, 2005, 2:00 p.m. at the PSALM Office
Deadline for Receipt of Bids by PSALM : May 18, 2005, 12:00 p.m. at the PSALM Office

References to dates and times shall be based on Manila time. Should any of the above dates fall on a holiday, the deadline shall be extended to the same time of the immediately succeeding business day in Makati City.

Interested parties will be required to post a bid security equivalent to ten percent (10%) of its total bid price in the form of an irrevocable letter of credit, confirmed by a local bank and acceptable to the Committee. The bid security of the winning bidder shall be substituted by a performance security to guarantee prompt, faithful and complete performance of its obligations under the transaction. A two-envelope bidding system will be adopted. Other details of the privatization of the Asset are contained in the Bidding Package.

Letters of Interest, Confidentiality Agreements and Undertakings shall be addressed and submitted to: The Chairman, Privatization, Bids and Awards Committee, PSALM Corporation, 2nd Floor, SGV II Building, Ayala Avenue, Makati City, Philippines. Inquiries and clarifications shall be addressed to Mr. Froilan A. Tampinco at the PSALM Office or at telephone number (632) 893-8202 loc. 202 or 206, telefax number (632) 840-3896 or e-mail address fatampinco@psalm.gov.ph.

The Committee reserves the right to accept or reject any interested party or bidder or proposals or bids therefrom, or any part thereof, and/or to waive any defects contained therein and accept the offer most advantageous to the Government, without offering any reason whatsoever. It does not assume any obligation to compensate or indemnify parties for any expense or loss that they may incur as a result of their participation in the privatization process, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made. Finally, it reserves the right to modify, supplement, or change the Bidding Procedures and other aspects of the privatization process at any time, including the schedule and the venue provided herein, for any reason whatsoever and without giving prior notice. Interested parties and/or bidders will be notified subsequently of such modifications, supplements, or changes.

(Sgd.) RAPHAEL P. M. LOTILLA
PSALM Privatization, Bids and Awards Committee
(March 21, 22 & 23, 2005)

DOLLAR AT 2-WEEK HIGH

Resource stocks up in Asia markets

SINGAPORE—Energy, mining and steel stocks rode strong resource prices to lead Asian shares up on Monday, and the dollar hit a two-week high against the euro in anticipation of a more aggressive US stance on interest rates.

With Tokyo markets closed for a holiday, an MSCI index of non-Japan shares was up 0.21 percent at 277.03, with energy and metals sub-indexes at the top of the leader board.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng and Singapore's Straits Times were flat.

Top world miners BHP and Rio Tinto climbed 1.1 percent and 0.4 percent respectively in Australia, while Chinese oil producer CNOOC climbed 0.6 percent in Hong Kong.

In South Korea, top fuel refiner SK Corp jumped 4.4 percent and steel maker Posco rose 1.4 percent.

Crude oil sat close to the record high of $57.60 a barrel reached last week on supply concerns, up 5 cents at $56.77.

Gold fell to $438.25 from $439.35 in New York on Friday as the dollar strengthened, making the metal more expensive to buy in other currencies.

"The dollar is getting support from expectations of a change in Fed language," said David Simmonds, currency strategist at Royal Bank of Scotland in Singapore.

Markets have already priced in a quarter percentage point rise in US interest rates this week after the US Federal Reserve meets on Tuesday.

Attention is now on the possibility of a statement accompanying the rate decision suggesting the central bank may be willing to take more aggressive action in coming months by removing the word "measured" when it refers to rate increases.

The euro fell to $1.3256 before recovering by 0225 GMT to around $1.3266, down 0.34 percent from the New York close of $1.3311.

The dollar was trading at 104.90 yen stronger by 0.23 percent from Friday's New York close of 104.69.

Some tech stocks shrugged off the Nasdaq's fall to a 2005 low on Friday. Samsung Electronics climbed 0.3 percent, and Taiwan's electronics sub-index rose 0.75 percent, helping Taiwan's benchmark index to rise 0.54 percent.

But Singapore's Creative Technology fell 3.9 percent to a near 7-month low.

Brilliance China Automotive Holdings Ltd. was down 9 percent after sliding as much as 15.28 percent after it issued a profit warning on Friday.

Australia's S&P ASX 200 climbed 0.38 percent, helped by its heavyweight resource stocks. South Korea's KOSPI was up 0.39 percent.

US stocks closed mixed on Friday. The Dow Jones industrial average ticked up 0.03 percent to 10,629.67 while the Nasdaq Composite Index fell below 2,000 points for the first time in 2005 to 1,999.98 before closing down 0.43 percent at 2007.79. *Reuters*

Overheating fears back in China

SHANGHAI— Official data suggesting a quickening of China's already fast-paced economy has rekindled overheating concerns, prompting economists to ask will Beijing revert to more central planning or market-based policies next?

"Contrary to initial impressions, Chinese government statisticians have just reported a stunning re-acceleration of industrial output growth over the first two months of 2005," Morgan Stanley chief economist and managing director Stephen Roach said after the release of data this week.

China's industrial output rose 16.9 percent to 903 billion yuan ($109 billion) in the first two months of the year, with much of the growth attributed to overseas demand for industrial exports.

No figures were given for February, when China enjoyed a week-long Lunar New Year holiday, although the two-month figure follows an 8.9 percent year-on-year increase in January.

Although the Chinese holiday distorts data, Roach said: "the numbers were a shocker." "A Chinese economy that appeared to be on a path of measured deceleration over the course of 2004 has clearly re-accelerated," he said.

Further fueling fears that the year-long central macro-economic controls ordered by Beijing have not been effective, China's fixed asset investment, a strong indicator of how much the government is spending on infrastructure, remained in the fast lane.

It grew 24.5 percent to 422.2 billion yuan ($50.9 billion) in the first two months of the year, a rate that was fractionally lower than the 25.8 percent increase in fixed asset investment for 2004 but well above the recently set target of 16 percent growth.

"At the current pace, we think investment is still expanding too rapidly, especially compared to GDP and consumption," Huang Yiping said in a note.

"Some policymakers were comfortable with 9.5 percent GDP growth last year, primarily because the average growth for the past 25 years was 9.2 percent. However, the problem lies in the structure of the economy," argued Huang.

Huang worries that the amount of fixed capital powering the Chinese economy likely rose to a 45 percent share of the country's GDP, a level widely acknowledged as developmentally unsustainable.

"If this trend continues, then the risk of a hard landing will rise further, despite the existing tightening measures," Huang said.

That China's leadership is worried about the unbalanced character of the world's seventh largest economy, was underscored by another centrally-planned decision this week to marginally increase home loan interest rates.

China's central bank raised the minimum rate for a mortgage loan of more than five years to 5.51 percent from 5.31 percent and urged commercial banks to increase down payments to 30 percent of a property's value instead of the current 20 percent.

"The property sector is really the bane of the government now, it has gone crazy in some big cities such as Shanghai," said Yi Xianrong, research fellow at the Institute of Bank and Finance of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. *AFP*

Fed to raise key US rates again

WASHINGTON—Odds are the US Federal Reserve this week will extend a steady-as-it-goes strategy of nudging interest rates up in quarter-percentage point steps, pledging more of the same while keeping a wary eye on prices.

Despite signs some officials on the Fed's policy panel were growing restive about words in its post-meeting statement forecasting "measured" rises, which have taken the target federal funds rate to 2.5 percent in six successive moves, it's likely too soon to scrap the language, analysts said.

One reason is that soaring oil prices have created some worry about their potential drag on economic growth and another is that Fed policymakers, who have worked to make their decision-making less opaque, have not yet signaled they are on the cusp of policy change.

"At some point they will depart from this very, very regimented course," said Richard DeKaser, chief economist for National City Corp. in Cleveland, "But I just don't think we're there yet."

In February testimony to Congress, Fed Chair Alan Greenspan sealed the direction of policy by saying rates remained "fairly low" after six hikes from a 46-year low of 1 percent in June.

So rates are going up, at least over the near term.

The only real drama is when the Fed will decide the federal funds rate is close enough to "neutral"—a level that neither spurs nor hinders growth—that it can drop a pledge of measured rises.

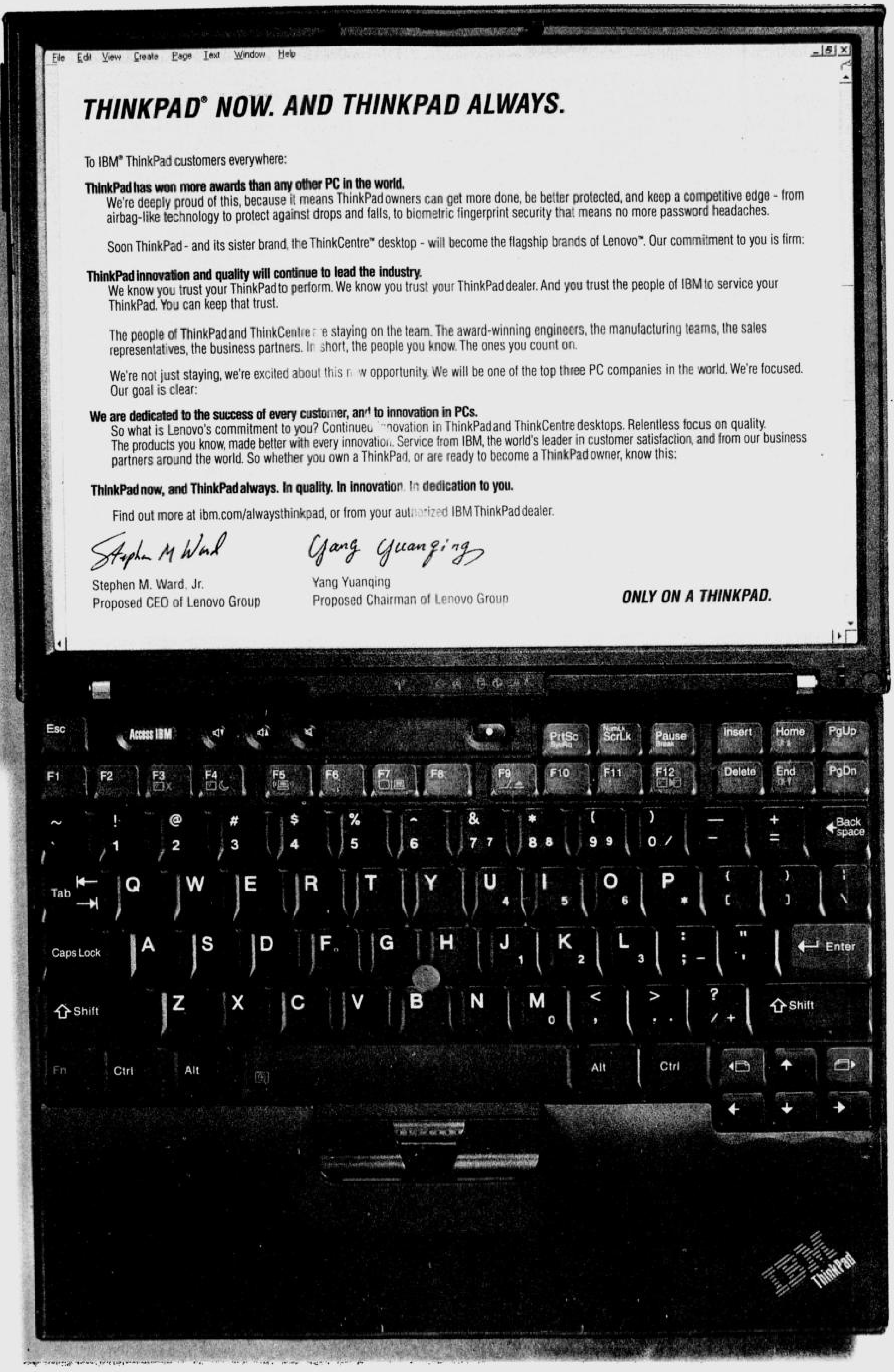
Doing so would give it more leeway to respond to economic trends, including to data indicating problematic price pressures that might potentially call for larger increases.

"Dropping the language is now just a matter of timing," London-based Capital Economics Ltd. predicted in a commentary on Friday. But it added that it expected the "measured" wording to remain "for the time being." Fed officials have not evinced any sharp discontent with current strategy. Fed Governor Ben Bernanke said last month the pace of price rises was not yet threatening: "I currently think inflation remains well-controlled, therefore I'm comfortable with our policy of removing accommodation at a measured pace."

The Fed has been running a policy of relatively low interest rates that it characterizes as accommodative because the Fed funds rate is so far below rates that would be considered normal for an expanding economy.

But there have been a few disquieting developments, including a jump in January core producer or wholesale prices of 0.8 percent in January and a spike in oil costs above $57 a barrel last week.

Exactly where the Fed's preferred "neutral" rate for the fed funds rate lies is hard to pin down, but it is generally taken to be somewhere between 3 and 5 percent, or about 2 percentage points above prevailing inflation. *Reuters*



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FILIPINAS PAWNSHOP INC., 1137 P. Gil St. Paco, Mla. Will sell all expired pledges of August and September 2004 on April 3, 2005, Sunday at 10:00a.m. Sons of J. Lanuza Auctioneer.
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1. Single storey, 3-classroom building 2. Single storey, 2-classroom building	Biliran National Agricultural High School	Biliran, Biliran
3. Single storey, home economics building	Bool National High School	Bool East, Culaba, Biliran

JBIC requires that bidders and contractors as well as the DepEd, under contracts funded with JBIC ODA loans, observe the highest standard of ethics during the procurement and execution of the such contract. In pursuance of this, JBIC: (i) will reject a proposal for award if it determines that the bidder recommended for award has engaged in corrupt or fraudulent practices in competing for the contract in question and (ii) will recognize a contractor as ineligible, for a stated period of time, to be awarded a contract funded with JBIC ODA loans if it, at any time, determines that the contractor has engaged in corrupt or fraudulent practices in competing for or in executing another contract financed by JBIC ODA loans or other Japanese ODA.

Bidding is open to all Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) registered contractors or joint venture contractors with valid license, general building in category and eligible to enter into a contract based on award. Schedules of issuance of bidding documents, pre-bidding conference and opening of bids are as follows:

Municipality		Issuance of Bidding Documents	Pre-Bid Conference	Opening of Bids
Biliran	Date	March 16-29, 2005	April 1, 2005	April 13, 2005
	Place	ME's Office, Municipal Hall	Municipal Hall	Municipal Hall
	Time		10:00 AM	10:00 AM
Culaba	Date	March 16-29, 2005	April 6, 2005	April 18, 2005
	Place	ME's Office, Municipal Hall	Municipal Hall	Municipal Hall
	Time		10:00 AM	10:00 AM
Contact Person: Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee or Municipal Engineer				

The complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested eligible bidders upon submission of a Letter of Intent to the Office of the Municipal Engineer and payment of non-refundable amount of P2,000.00 to the Cashier's Office. They may visit also the DepEd website at http://www.deped.gov.ph or the Procurement Service at http://www.procurementservice.org.

Submission of bids together with all the documents required in the bid documents must be delivered to the aforesaid venue and dates. All bids will be opened immediately thereafter in the presence of all the bidders or their legally authorized representatives.

(Sgd.) **JUAN MIGUEL M. LUZ**
Undersecretary for Administration and Finance

(PDI – March 15 & 22, 2005)

PORO POINT MANAGEMENT CORPORATION
A Subsidiary of Bases Conversion Development Authority

PORO POINT MANAGEMENT CORPORATION

INVITATION FOR PROPOSALS

ASSET DISPOSITION PROGRAM

The Poro Point Management Corporation (PPMC) is inviting interested proponents to participate in the Asset Disposition Program (ADP). The ADP involves the development and privatization of the 65.5 hectares Tourism Complex and the 40 hectares Airport Area, covering a total area of one hundred five and a half (105.5) hectares, more or less.

Interested proponents should submit their Letters of Interest to PPMC and may purchase the Terms of Reference (TOR), which provide the requirements that will enable proponents to participate in the privatization.

The TOR for the project will be issued to interested proponents on March 16 to 18, March 21 to 23 and March 28 to 29 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the PPMC office, Pennsylvania Avenue, Poro Point Special Economic and Freeport Zone, San Fernando City, La Union, upon payment of a non-refundable amount of PhP20,000.00 payable to PPMC in Cash or Manager's Check.

A conference among interested proponents is tentatively set for March 31, 2005 at the PPMC Office. The objective of the conference is to discuss the property, the TOR and other clarifications from interested proponents. Interested proponents will be informed of the final schedule and venue of the conference through contact numbers submitted to the PPMC.

Interested proponents can direct their inquiries to:

THE CHAIRMAN
SPECIAL BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
Poro Point Management Corporation
Pennsylvania Avenue, Poro, San Fernando City
La Union

or they can contact Ms. Josefa Catherine T. Bada at telephone numbers 242-4016 or 888-5956 or send e-mail at ppmc@sflu.com.

(Sgd.) **ATTY. ANTHONY C. MANGUIAT**
Special Bids and Awards
Committee Chairman

(PDI–March 16, 22 & 26, 2005)

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the way,
the truth
and the
life.
No one
comes
to the
Father
except
through
Me.
John 14:6

DR. LILIA MALIGALIG-BAKER, Ph.D.

February 12, 1948 – March 18, 2005

U.P. Rural High School 1964
B.S. Food & Nutrition, UP Diliman 1969
MS & PhD Food & Nutrition, Kansas State University

Her bereaved husband, **IAN BAKER**; children **PAMELA & SCOTT**; parents, **COL & Mrs. MODESTO V. MALIGALIG, PA (GSC) Ret.**; brothers & sisters Marietta, Proceso, Rhodora, Prudencio, Leopoldo, Angelita, Elizabeth (†), and Danilo; in-laws, aunts and uncles, nephews and nieces, other relatives and friends request that prayers be offered for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state in Toronto, Canada and will be interred there on March 25, 2005.

Engr. Hipolito B. Sta. Maria

of Mandaluyong City

Peacefully joined our Creator
on March 20, 2005 at the age of 68.

His bereaved wife **Antonina**; children **Annalisa** and **Frederick**, **Angelica** and **Tyrone**, **Alexander** and **Cristine**; other relative and friends request readers to join them in praying for his eternal happiness in heaven.

His body lies in state at Loyola Memorial Chapels, Guadalupe, Makati City.

Interment will be on March 24 at San Felipe Neri Parish Cemetery.

Manuela Locsin Ledesma

Loving wife of Ricardo (†),
mother of Tony, Jim, Opê, Monet (†),
Esto (†), Rene, Al, Iggy, & Maricar (†)

Peacefully joined her Creator
on March 21, 2005, at the age of 95

Her cremated remains are at the Capilla del Señor, Sanctuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati. Funeral Mass will be held on Wednesday, March 23, 5:00 p.m.

With deepest gratitude attached to our lifetimes,
we cherish those who implored that
our dearly beloved

REMEDIOS CORPUS MOYA

attains salvation face to face with her God of Reason and of Revelation, and those who, in one way or another, shared with us during the hour of our consuming grief and pain, as we mourned our great and irreplaceable loss.

JOVIT C. MOYA AND RELATIVES

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"For me,
To Live Is Christ and
To Die Is Gain"
Phil 1:21

WITH PEACE IN HER HEART,

Our Most Dearly Beloved Sister

DRA. ROSARIO "CHARITO" BUSTOS ATENCIO

Went home to be with our Lord Jesus Christ
On March 19, 2005 at the age of 76.

Devoted wife of **Oscar** (†), loving mother of **JJ**, **Gina**, **Butch**, **Lou** and **Bernard (Cruz)** and **Ted**, doting grandmother to **Jackie** and **Gia**, Thoughtful sister of **Nenette & Ben Sanvictores** and **Letty & Vic** (†) **Castillo**, Faithful and Loyal Friend, **Guiding "Nanay"** to her Colleagues, Generous Relative and Nurturing Doctor to Her Countless Patients.

Her body lies in state at Nacional Memorial Homes, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on March 23, 2005 at Loyola Cemetery, Marikina after the 9:00 a.m. Service.

CONCEPCION RAMIREZ vda. de CABUNGCAL

of San Isidro, Nueva Ecija & New Jersey, USA

*Peacefully joined her Creator, her loving husband **Francisco Cabungcal** (†) at 6:30 a.m. on March 14, 2005 at the age of 89.*

Her loving children **Carlos & Rosemarie, Precy & Wency Azaña, Rolly & Delia, Dante & Tessie, Ben & Grace, Rosie & Al Laciste, Cita**; her fourteen grandchildren, five great grandchildren, and relatives request the pious readers to pray for her eternal rest and everlasting happiness.

Her remains lies in state at Chapel Premier I, Loyola Memorial Chapel, Guadalupe, Makati City.

Interment will be on Saturday, March 26 at 10:00 a.m. at Manila Memorial Park-Sucat, Parañaque.

CLASSIFIEDS

BOHOL I ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
Maca-as, Tubigon, Bohol
Tel./Fax No. (038) 508-8095 • 508-0084 • 508-0085

INVITATION FOR BIDS NO. 2005-03

The **BOHOL I ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (BOHECO-I)** thru 5% reinvestment and general fund intends to procure various electrical materials and equipment for substation and industrial load metering under its coverage area.

Lot 1 – POTENTIAL TRANSFORMER [PT] for Metering – 21 units
Lot 2 – CURRENT TRANSFORMER [CT] Multi ratio for Metering – 21 units
Lot 3 – MULTIFUNCTION ELECTRONIC METER – 15 units
Lot 4 – CALIBRATING MACHINE – 1 set

Sealed bids for the supply and delivery of the above-mentioned materials will be received by BOHECO-I as its main office in Maca-as, Tubigon, Bohol on or before April 12, 2005 at 2:30 P.M. at which time and place said proposal would be opened and read in the presence of bidders or their representative who choose to attend.

The interested bidders may obtain information, secure list of bidding documents from BOHECO-I Main Office upon payment of a non-refundable fee of One Thousand and Two Hundred Pesos (Php 1,200.00).

(Sgd.) **CARLOS B. ITABLE**
General Manager

(PDI – March 22, 2005)

Republic of the Philippines
Municipal Government of Calauag, Quezon

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

No. 005-05

The **MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT OF CALAUAG, QUEZON (MGCQ)** invites interested manufacturers/suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid, if eligible, for the **SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF 1 UNIT BRAND NEW BACKHOE LOADER.**

The approved budget for this contract is **Php 6,200,000.00.**

All interested parties are invited to attend the Pre-Bid Conference on **Tuesday, April 5, 2005, 2:00 PM at the New Session Hall of the Sangguniang Bayan, Rizal St., Municipal Building Annex, Calauag, Quezon.**

The bid documents shall be available at the **Municipal Budget Office, 1/F Municipal Hall, Calauag, Quezon** starting **March 22, 2005** upon payment of non-refundable fee of **Five Thousand Pesos (Php5,000.00).**

The bidders shall drop their duly accomplished eligibility requirements, technical and financial proposals in three separate sealed envelopes in the bid box located at the **Municipal Budget Office, 1/F Municipal Hall, Calauag, Quezon.** Deadline for submission and receipt of bids shall be on **Tuesday, April 26, 2005 at 2:00 PM.**

For more information, please call the BAC Secretariat at telephone no. **(042) 301-6575.**

MGCQ reserves the right to waive any formality in the responses to the eligibility requirements and to this invitation, MGCQ further reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, or declare a failure of bidding, or no award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) EDUARDO N. INTOY
BAC Secretariat

(PDI–March 22 & April 5, 2005)

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS
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BULLETIN OF VACANT POSITIONS

(In compliance with RA 941)

PERMANENT POSITION

(1) **Administrative Officer II (Accountant I)** – (SG 11); Item No. OSEC-DECSB-ADOF2-61-2004; Bachelor's degree in Commerce or Business Administration major in Accounting experience and training none required; Eligibility: RA 1080 (Certified Public Accountant)

CONTRACTUAL POSITIONS
To be assigned in Manila Office:

(1) **Project Development Officer III** – (SG 18); Item No. BEAM Stage 2-PCU-3-1 Bachelor's degree relevant to the job; 2 years of relevant experience; 8 hours of relevant training; Eligibility: Career Service Professional (optional)

(2) **Project Development Officer II** – (SG 15); Item Nos. BEAM Stage 2-PMU-4-2 and BEAM Stage 2 – PCU-4; Bachelor's degree relevant to the job; 1 year of relevant experience; 4 hours of relevant training; Eligibility: Career Service Professional (optional)

(1) **Administrative Aide VI (Clerk III)** – (SG 6); Item No. BEAM Stage 2-PCU-7; Completion of two years studies in college; experience and training none required; Eligibility: Career Service Subprofessional (optional)

(1) **Administrative Aide III (Driver I)** – (SG 3); Item No. BEAM Stage 2 – PCU-8 Elementary school graduate; experience and training none required; Eligibility: Driver's license

(1) **Administrative Aide III (Utility Worker II)** – (SG 3); Item No. BEAM Stage 2 – PCU-9; Elementary school graduate; experience and training none required

To be assigned in Davao/Cotabato Office:

(2) **Project Development Officer IV** – (SG 22); Item Nos. BEAM Stage 2 – PMU-2-1 and 2-2. Bachelor's degree relevant to the job; 3 years of relevant experience, 16 hours of relevant training; Eligibility: Career Service Professional (optional)

(1) **Project Development Officer III** – (SG 18); Item No. BEAM Stage 2-PMU-3-2; Bachelor's degree relevant to the job, 2 years of relevant experience, 8 hours of relevant training; Eligibility: Career Service Professional (optional)

(1) **Administrative Aide III (Utility Worker II)** – (SG 3); Item No. BEAM Stage 2 – PMU-9; Elementary school graduate; experience and training none required

Please send comprehensive resumé and credentials to the following address:

For the permanent position & Manila Office assignment:

Human Resource Management Office
DepEd-EDPITAF
Dorm D, DepEd Complex
Meralco Avenue, Pasig City

For Davao/Cotabato Office assignment:

Dr. Susana B. Estigoy
Philippine Project Manager – BEAM Stage 2 – PMU
DepED RO XI
REMCO National Center
F. Torres St., Davao City

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NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION
Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO BID FOR THE SALE OF USED/WASTE OIL

"AS IS, WHERE IS", "TAKE ALL" AND "CLEAN UP"

DATE OF BIDDING: **April 12, 2005, 2:00 PM, Solarium Hall, Building-1, Ground Floor NPC-Head Office, Agham Road corner Quezon Ave., Diliman, Q.C.**

The National Power Corporation will conduct public bidding for the sale of the following:

ITEM	DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION	MIN. BID PRICE
-1-	**One-Year Contract of Sale for Used/Waste Oil Generation at Panay Diesel Power Plant Complex in Dingle, Iloilo Province.** Important: This Disposal/Sale is limited only to accredited EMB-DENR Hazardous Waste TSD Facility Operators (Treaters) and subject to Post Qualification and Inspection of actual operating facility prior to award of contract.	P4.00 Per Liter

ALL BIDS MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE FOLLOWING:

1. PROPOSAL BOND DEPOSIT IN THE FORM OF CASH OR MANAGER'S/CASHIER'S CHECK IN THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF P120,000.00;
2. LATEST INCOME TAX RETURN (2003 or 2004) ORIGINAL OR CERTIFIED XEROX COPY FOR THE BIDDER OR AN AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF THE COMPANY;
3. VALID EMB-DENR ACCREDITATION FOR TSD FACILITY OPERATOR (TREATER) WITH THE ACCREDITED HAZARDOUS WASTE TRANSPORTER.

All interested parties who wish to secure the bid forms for this public bidding must present a valid Income Tax Return (2003/2004 original or BIR certified copy) and valid identification card with picture (such as Company IDs, Passport, Driver's License, PRC Licensure Card, etc.), and must present original EMB-DENR accreditations.

Interested parties who wish to participate in the public bidding may secure the bid form at P1,000.00/set from Mr. S.V. Lomuntad, Jr./Mr. Al Plata at MMD, Ground Floor, Bldg.-1, NPC Head Office, Corner Agham Road and Quezon Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City or call telephone no. 924-5384. Deadline for issuance of the bid forms is until 4:30 p.m., April 11, 2005.

For the materials Management Department

(Sgd.) **FELIX B. TACATA, JR.**
OIC, MMD

(PDI - March 21, 22 & 23, 2005)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
REGIONAL TRIAL COURT
NATIONAL CAPITAL JUDICIAL REGION
BRANCH 90, QUEZON CITY

IN THE MATTER OF:
PETITION FOR CORPORATE
REHABILITATION WITH PRAYER
FOR SUSPENSION OF PAYMENTS,
RAMCAR, INC., ET AL.,
Principal Petitioners,
and
AMALGAMATED BATTERY,
COMPONENTS, INC., ET AL.,
Affiliated Petitioners,
x - x

SPECIAL PROCEEDING NO. Q-01-45804

ORDER

In the interest of justice, set the principal petitioners' March 10, 2005 Motion To Terminate Proceedings On Account Of The Successful Implementation Of The Court-Approved Second (2nd) Amended Rehabilitation Plan for hearing on March 29, 2005 (Tuesday) at 2:00 P.M. The parties/counsels and Mr. Fortunato B. Cruz, the Rehabilitation Receiver are ordered to file their respective comment thereon on or before said date and time.

The principal petitioners/Rehabilitation Receiver are ordered to cause the publication of this Order in the Philippine Daily Inquirer, the Manila Bulletin, the Philippine Star, and the Malaya on March 22, 2005 (Tuesday) in the business section of said newspapers so that all interested parties and the public may be informed of the latest development in this case.

SO ORDERED.
Quezon City, March 14, 2005.

(Sgd.) REYNALDO B. DAWAY, BSC., C.P.A.
Presiding Judge

(PDI – March 22, 2005)

Passion

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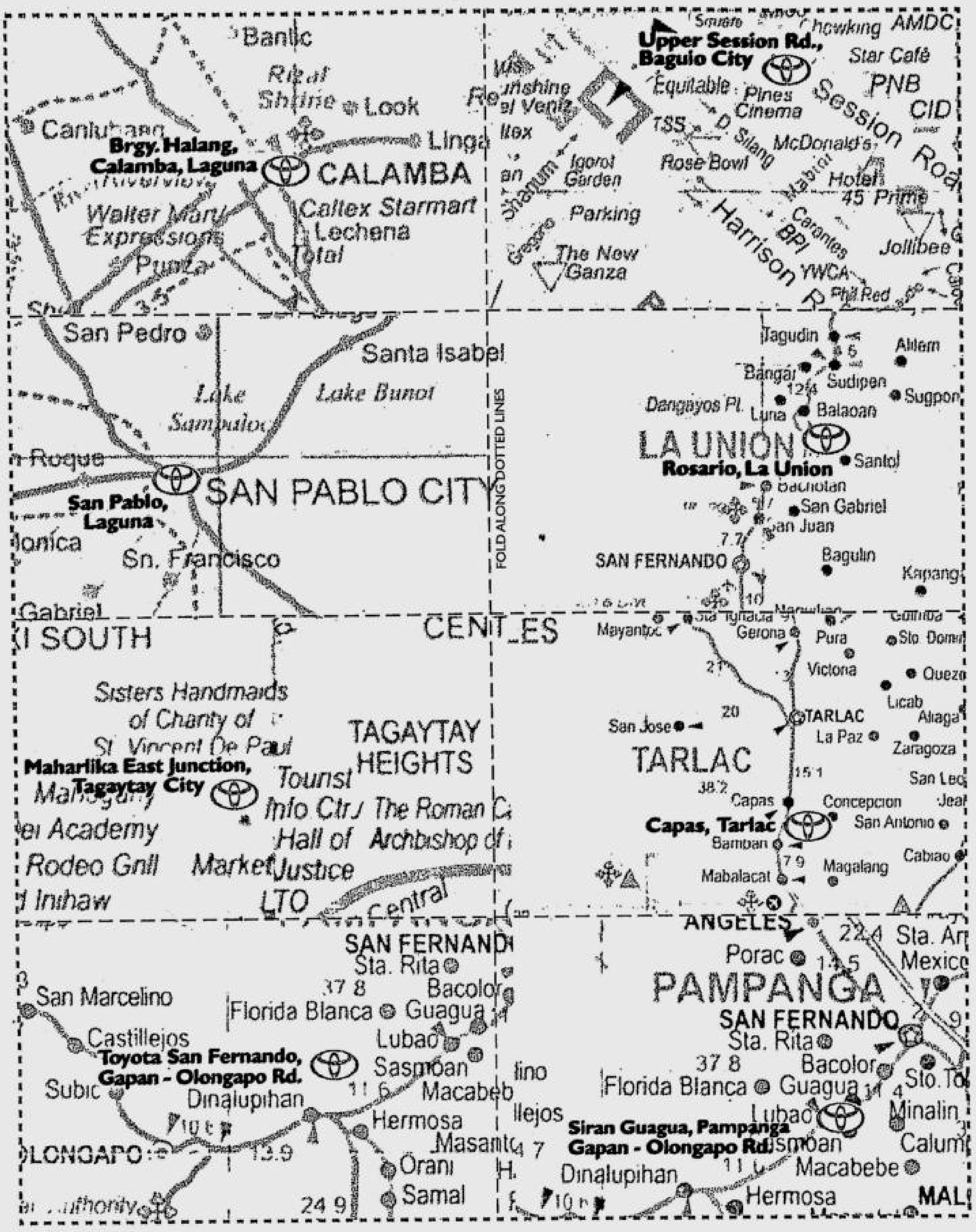
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Gov't closely watches rising cement prices

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry has stepped up its monitoring of cement prices as the continuing uptrend has pushed the price up to P165 per 40-kilogram bag or 9.3 percent higher over a three-month period.

Trade Secretary Juan B. Santos said his department was closely coordinating with its regional and provincial offices nationwide in monitoring the trend in cement prices to be able to take the necessary steps in halting any unusual price increases.

Demand for cement in the country peaks during the summer months.

DTI data show that, in the first two weeks of March, the prevailing average retail prices of Portland cement nationwide went up slightly by 0.29 percent from P158.05 to P158.51 per bag compared to the fourth week of February.

The retail price of cement remained constant for all the other regions nationwide, ranging from P153 to P165 per 40-kg bag, except for Region III where prices increased from P150 to P154 a bag.

Industry officials have said increases in retail prices of cement since January was due to the increase in the cost of electricity, coal and other production inputs, aside from transportation costs.

Santos, in an earlier interview, said certain factors like the increase in energy costs might be understandable as industry players say this accounts for 80 percent of the variable cost in producing cement.

He said the cement industry was power-intensive and uses big amounts of coal and bunker fuel to run dedicated power plants. These expenses are eventually passed on to consumers.

Also, local cement manufacturers are seeking an extension on the P15.60-a-bag safeguard duty on gray Portland cement, which expired last Dec. 9.

BIR to tap scouts for tax operations

By Doris C. Dumlao

MALACAÑANG, through main revenue-collecting agency, Bureau of Internal Revenue has teamed up with the country's 600,000-strong boy and girl scouts organizations to intensify its drive against tax evaders.

"Operation Dikit," launched by President Macapagal-Arroyo, Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima and BIR Commissioner Guillermo Parayno at the Glorietta Mall in Makati yesterday, was expected to help the BIR achieve its revenue goals this year.

"The estimated leakage from corruption is about P200 billion and a big portion of that is from commercial establishments. This is why we are focusing on this," Parayno said.

The boy/girl scouts would affix BIR stickers on an estimated one million cash register and point of sales machines to ensure the monthly submission of gross receipts from these machines.

The stickers remind establishments of their monthly sales reports, and customers of their right to demand a receipt.

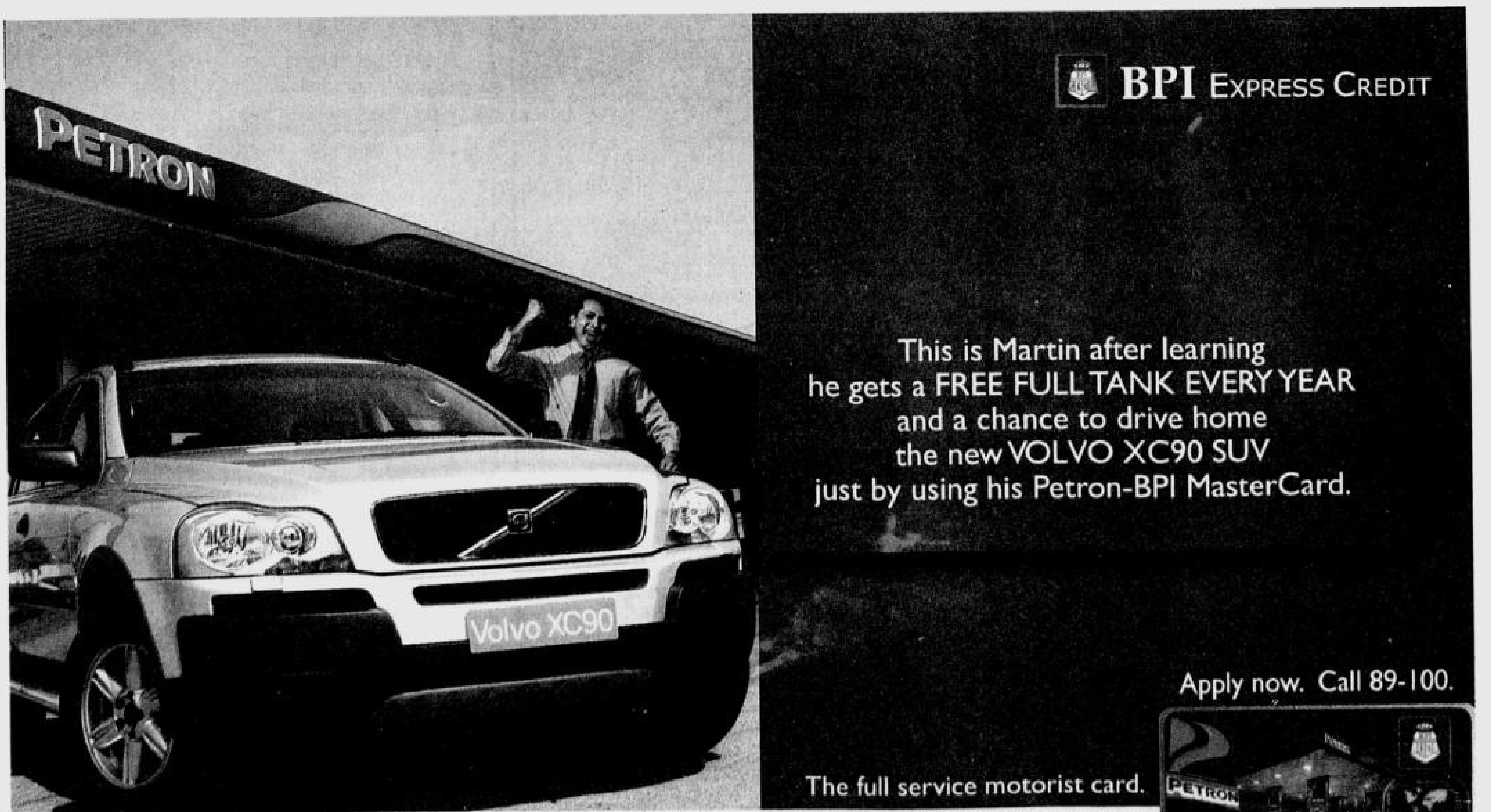
The scouts will also be deputized by the BIR as tax police, and will be tapped to distribute flyers explaining the mechanics of the electronics sales reporting system.

"We hope to improve the probability that we'll meet our goal with this one," Parayno told reporters at the project launching yesterday.

The President, Purisima and Parayno led the scouts in affixing stickers at various establishments across the Ayala-led mall yesterday.

Parayno said these cash registers would be enrolled in the BIR's tax mapping system so that tax payments could easily be compared with actual sales output.

The BIR Commissioner said the project was launched in time for the summer, so that the boy/girl scouts could start helping the BIR catch tax-evading merchants over the next two months.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*Computed based on the Petron XCS Plus rate of Php 28.00 per liter and the average motorist's consumption of 40 liters per week. See flyers for details. Membership fee is FREE for the first year. Visit any participating Petron station, BPI branch, BPI Family Bank branch, Express Banking Center or www.bpiexpressonline.com. Promo is from Oct. 21, 2004 - April 30, 2005. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 2521, Series of 2004.

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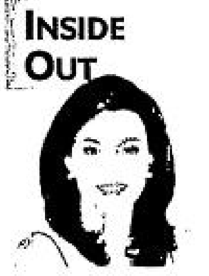
or email us at pr_lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

LOW-CALORIE food guide /C4

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

A biblical healthy diet?

INSIDE OUT



Cory Quirino

AN ancient healthy eating plan may help you live longer and better. Who would have thought that thousand of years ago, a diet was fashioned by God?

Dr. Don Colbert, in his fascinating book "What Would Jesus Eat," provides us with both biblical and medical insights on this diet.

Are you ready to make a new lifestyle choice in a God-inspired way?

Key questions

Before embarking on this new lifestyle discovery, ask yourself these questions:

"Why do I eat this?"

"Would Jesus eat this?"

Levitical Law

The law laid the foundation for Jesus' food choices—the same law God gave to the Israelites through Moses.

Genesis 1:29 - Initially, God promoted vegetarianism for our health. "See I have given you every herb of the earth and every tree whose fruit yields seed, to you it shall be for food."

Genesis 1:30 - "I have given every green herb for food." Note: from Adam to Noah, the average life span was phenomenal: Adam, 90 years; Seth, 912 years; Enos, 905 years; Jared, 962 years; Methusalah, 969 years; Abraham, 175 years; Moses, 120 years.

It is suggested that after the flood, meat was introduced into the diet and the oxygen component of the air was reduced.

Clean, unclean meats

Leviticus 11:18 - "These are the animals which you may eat... having cloven hoofs and chewing the cud... you shall not eat the camel...hare...swine..."

Deuteronomy 14:4-5 - "...you may eat the ox, sheep, goat, deer, gazelle, roe deer, wild goat, mountain goat, antelope, mountain sheep..."

Bread of life

Mark 6:11 - "Give us this day our daily bread..." Jesus made a direct reference to manna (which in Hebrew means "what is it?", the question on people's minds when it fell from heaven). Manna appeared like small seeds. When ground finely and baked into cakes, it tasted like "wafers made with honey" (Num. 11:8, Ex. 16:31).

Whole grains are good

Luke 6:1 - "...He went through the grain fields...and His disciples plucked the heads of grain and ate them, rubbing them in their hands." Jesus ate bran, wheat/wheat germ, barley.

For your own diet:

- Choose whole-grain products (breads, pasta, bagels, muffins, pretzels).
- You may also drink the grain—wheat and barley grass can be juiced as they are high in chlorophyll that carries oxygen.

Fresh fish

Jesus worked miracles with fish, His good gifts.

Matthew 14: 16-21 - "... took seven loaves and a few little fish" Note: The little fish may have been sardines from the herring family.

In an earlier part of the Bible, it says:

"... you may eat of all that are in the water whatever... has fins and scales, whatever does not have fins or scales that shall be an abomination to you." - Lev. 11:9-12

No-nos are catfish, monkfish, swordfish, sturgeon, shark, European flat fish, oysters, shrimps, crabs, lobsters, clams, crayfish, mussels, scallops. (fact: toxins from the sea remain in the flesh of shell fish)

Note: Most fish are good sources of essential nutrients including omega 3 fatty acids. Jesus most likely ate His fish cooked, not raw.

Lean meat

With certainty, Jesus ate lean meat sparingly and did not eat pork nor did He drink the blood of slaughtered animals. (Pork was considered unclean because pigs were known to eat their own feces, garbage and decaying flesh.) Kosher meat, which is different from regular meat, is prepared following strictly the Torah (God's verbal law given to Moses), which explained the proper way to slaughter animals with the least pain and drained of its blood.

Poultry and eggs

Deuteronomy 14:20 - "... you may eat all clean birds..." (chicken, geese, duck, quail, dove, turkey, pigeon...)

The Jesus diet

Beans, lentils/legumes, whole grains, lean meats, freshly cooked fish, vegetables, fruits, poultry, yogurt, cheese and butter sparingly, garlic, onions, leeks, cabbage, broccoli, water, wine, cauliflower, tomatoes, olives/olive oil, fruits, sparingly.

The best breads eaten during this time was a pita-type bread made with olive oil.

Water as beverage

Jesus drank water, his favorite beverage. The drinking habits of Jesus, as suggested by the Bible, may have included water, juices, herbal teas and wine which, in those days, was red (there was no evidence that He drank excessively) and was also used as medicine.

In the Last Supper, Jesus lifted a cup of wine and said: "... This cup is the new covenant in My Blood" (1 Cor. 11:25). But whether the fruit of the vine (Matt 26:27-29) actually meant unfermented or fermented wine (or juice) cannot be ascertained.

Sweet tooth?

Jesus' main dessert was fruit—grapes, fig, pomegranates, dates, apricots, apples, raisin, melon, berries, nuts. Honey was used as sweetener.

Staying fit to preach

Jesus walked a lot—21,595 miles in His lifetime (including his public ministry and travels from Egypt to Nazareth). On the average, he walked 10-20 miles daily (remember that the distance around the world at the equator is 24,901.55 miles).

Spiritual strength

Preaching, prayer and meditation, as well as love, empowered Jesus. To be connected with the Father was central to his message of resurrection—new life can be ours if we die.

May the Eternal reign in our hearts as the first rays of the Easter sun start our day with hope.

Love and light!

Special thanks to Bro. Ernie and Sis. Eva Rodriguez of South City Church (Alabang) for lending me their book.

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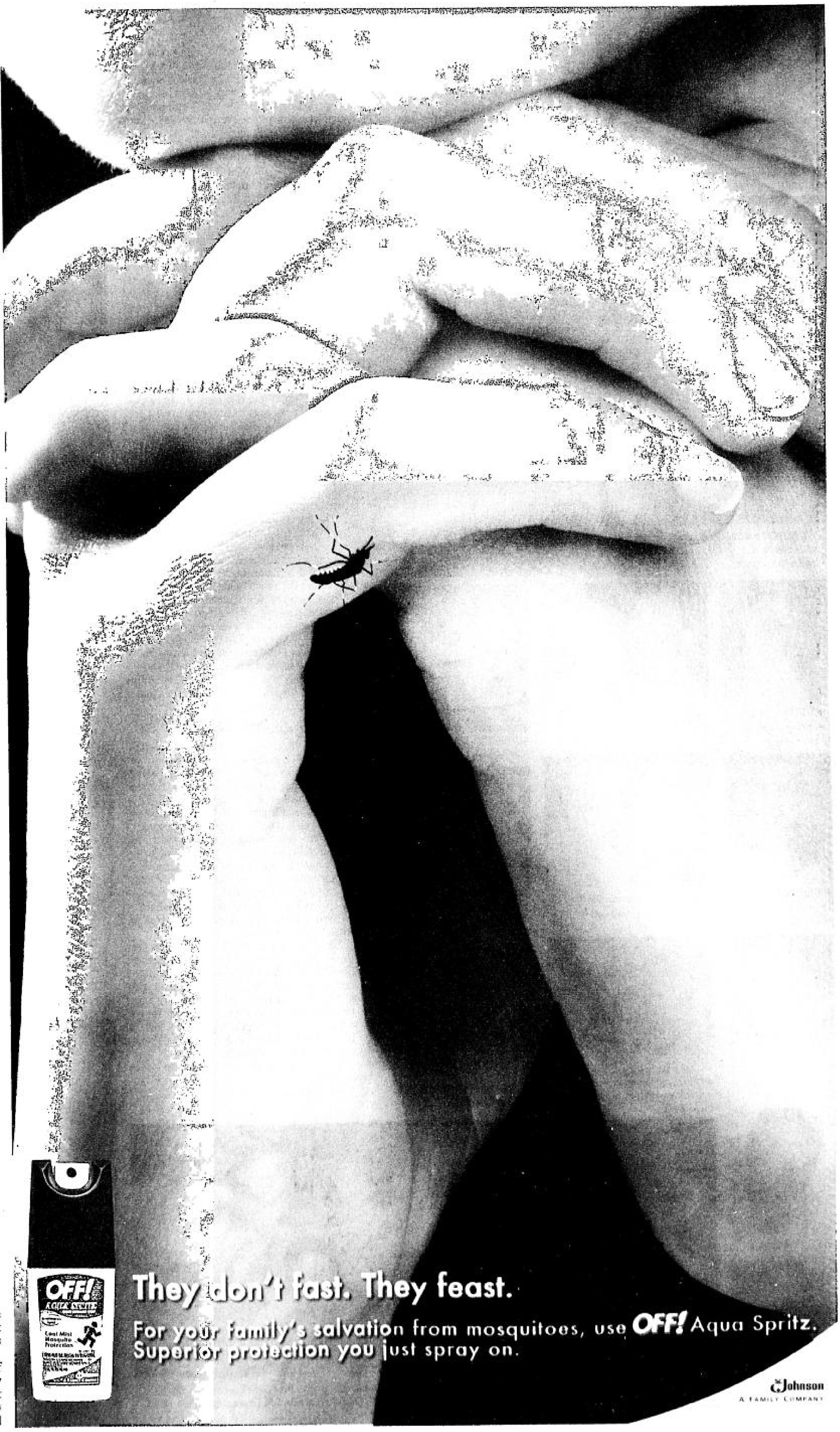
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CLOSE-KNIT PALS. Gourmet Susie Bayot Ortigas with the birthday boy, Raul Manzano, and close pals Menchu Katigbak and Baby Girl Baluyot Fricke

WE ARE FAMILY. In Boracay, birthday gal Carla Reyes T. with husband, Al Tengco, and kids Alessandro, super attractive eye-catcher Amanda Camille and Juan Xavier

They're all a year 'younger'

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by **Alex Van Hagen** using **Kodak** EasyShare system

THE YOUNG heir to the leader of the jewel brigade, **Linda Oledan**, invited some of her closest pals to a four-day stay at the Sea Wind Resort on my dream island, Boracay.

First night were cocktails and just chilling out. The following day, on the eve of her birthday, Linda gave a fab dinner, excellently prepared by the grand chef of Dos Mestizos, **Bingoy Remedios**, no less, *palanggas*.

Bingoy prepared like nine kinds of superb *pica-pica* including the fried-in-garlic chorizo de Bilbao and lentil soup that was to-die for. The fab hostess that Linda is, she served foie gras for that extra touch. It was brought by Monte Carlo-based international banker, **Nene Lacson**, from Paris.

After toasts with the bubbly, the gang partied until almost daybreak.

Next day, it was gourmet extra ordinaire **Carla Reyes Tengco's** turn to celebrate her birthday in Boracay, too. Her husband, man for all seasons, witty business entrepreneur **Al Tengco**, had a surprise for her and her 30 guests (most of them classmates of **Maricris Zobel** who were all in Bora at the time). He had the Moïse band flown in from Manille to play during Carla's birthday bash.

Needless to say it was dancing until we literally dropped, with the last invitee staggering out at 5 a.m.

And that, dahlings, is awesome Boracay for you—the place to have two fab birthday parties.

When you have two women—cousins at that—born with platinum spoons, educated in the best way possible, successful achievers in their own fields, and well-traveled then you can be sure that when they entertain, you will have the best of everything, well, almost the best of everything.

Golden boy

Well *palanggas*, cousins **Chuchu Madrigal-Eduque** and **Bela Madrigal Vazquez** threw a 50th birthday party for their close pal, golden boy **Raul Manzano**. They invited 50, natch, of Raul's closest friends for a fab dinner at Chuchu's sprawling well-manicured garden, which was decorated with eye-catching red Chinese lanterns and torches.

One long dinner table that sat 50, was superbly decorated by tasteful interior designer **Baby Girl Baluyot Fricke**, who assisted Chuchu, *palanggas*. It was adorned with romantic candle lights and *sampaguita*, plus loads of Chinese giveaway including bamboo vases with fortune plants; golden roosters, this year's must-have bird; and loot bags with L'Occitaine candle in a glass jar, oranges and gold chocolate coins.

Spread out in one part of the garden were food stations where Le Soufflé's excellently catered buffet dinner was set up.

The invitees started with cocktails and finger food in another side of the garden *palanggas*. They enjoyed *pritson pan de sal* with *adobo* and white cheese, and the famous crabmeat and shiitake mushroom appetizers of Ms Gourmet herself, **Susie Bayot Ortigas**.

The main course consisted of a selection of everything meaty and punched up carbo. But a Madrigal dinner is never complete without Susie O's yummy paella. On Chuchu E's special request, Raul brought his famous baked turkey and stuffing, his *lola*'s recipe.

At the end of the dinner, Raul blew out the candle on his cake patterned after his magazine, with him on the cover.

Touching surprise

And, lastly, it was Al Tengco's turn to celebrate his 40-something birthday bash at his home in Kasiyahan at North Forbes, *palanggas*. The home was newly and superbly decorated by the man, **Budji Layug**, himself.

It was an advance birthday celebration as most of the people he wanted to invite were in town. Without batting an eyelash, 50 of his closest pals were there to wish him many many more happy, healthy and wealthy years to come. And, on the eve of his real birthday, he had a quiet dinner with a few closest pals and friends from San Francisco, **Trisha Caballero** and **Ramon Torres**, who were in town for a week's stay.

Little did he know that his gang was "ordered" by his wife Carla to pop up at their home right before the bewitching hour of midnight. We all did, to the absolute surprise of Al T. We all sang the Happy Birthday song, before the celebrator blew out a candle for another year of his beautiful life. He was so touched that, at the end, Al Tengco could only say "Thank you" to all of us.

To our real cool Mr. Ambassador, let's have more surprises like this.

Cheers, *palanggas*.

LIA Valencia, Dina Chuidian and Gina Africa Aboitiz

GANG OF 3. Nina Romualdez with the honorees, San Francisco-based Ramon Torres and Tisha Caballero

THE BLACK PACK. Freddie Olbes, magnate Jack Atienza and his wife, restaurateur Cecille Reynoso A.

ASSUMPTION PALS. Carol Garcia, Gina Gabaldon Hechanova, Angel Gerena Padilla, Marion Olondris and Sonsoles Erquiaga Barretto

STANDING: San Francisco-based businessman Mario Suarez with Le and Mari Lagdameo; (seated) Amy Suarez and Mikey Cojuangco

JETSETTER and working socialite Karen Santos

POPULAR Toffer Vidal and gorgeous Carol Masibay Garcia

SUPER PALS. Melissa Mercado Martel with Jomar Munarriz

CHELONG Rebollida Larrauri and Sonsoles Barretto

MALU Salvador, Maricris Cardenas Zobel and Marie Concepcion Young

ROCKSTAR and rave girl, glamorous Vicky Zubiri

STILL on cloud nine. Mai Mai Cojuangco and husband Andrea Zini

METRO Society's editor in chief Lia Bernardo and achiever Renna Hechanova Angeles

ATTRACTIVE Menchu Gonzales Manticon and Pepper Teehankee

MEGA interior designer and stylist Mike Sandoval and Dumaguete's blonde, blue-eyed beauty, Maricris Vasquez Prada

PILOT, tycoon and wine connoisseur Paqui Ortigas

FROM Singapore, stylish Kathy de Guzman, with international polo player and businessman Iñigo Zobel

MARIPI Muscat and architect Anton Mendoza

BUSINESS magnate Jose Luis "Sel" Yulo

NOEL Onate

DAVAO Rep. Tony Boy Floirendo

BITO Manticon

HAIL! HAIL! The gang's all here. (standing) Monte Carlo banker Nene Lacson, pretty Maridel Villavicencio, Carla Tengco, Bibing Villanueva, Diding Hizon, Johnny Velasquez and Freddie Olbes; (seated) Adji Lizares, Maripi Muscat, birthday gal Linda Oledan and *moi*

DOS Mestizos, the power behind the excellent dinner of birthday gal Linda O.: mega chef Bingoy Remedios, Bon-Bon Baes, Deo Manipol, Hermie Villaranda and Michael Carampatan

CONCOY Tuason

Dealing with kids with psychic gifts

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

"HAS it ever occurred to you that there seems to be more children with extraordinary psychic gifts born in the last 15 years than before?" several people have asked me.

I do not know whether this is just "coincidence," but yes, I have noted this trend lately. These gifted children begin to speak at an earlier age, they see things that ordinary people do not see, they can tell when a relative or friend will arrive before he or she knocks on the door, they can tell if an accident will happen, and scariest of all, they can tell with uncanny accuracy who will die in the family.

Several of these extraordinary children have been brought to me by their parents or relatives because they do not know how to handle the kids and what to do with their psychic gifts.

The children are fortunate if their parents are open-minded enough to seek professional psychic help. Otherwise, they may be considered freaks or possessed by the devil.

Last year, a worried mother residing in Ayala, Alabang, Muntinlupa, came to see me because her 10-year-old son could see and talk to his 26-year-old brother who died in a motorcycle accident. The dead brother appears to the boy almost every day and talks to him as if he were still alive, but only the younger brother could see him.

Another mother brought her 12-year-old son all the way from Sorsogon because he has been exhibiting extraordinary psychic powers. He can, for instance, see his own past lives, read other people's minds and see objects behind walls.

He has X-ray vision and can see diseased or malfunctioning organs of the human body without any medical instruments. He talks about his life as a German soldier during World War II and cries over the death of a comrade-in-arms in the Vietnam War.

A woman lawyer in Metro Manila wrote about her 7-year-old niece Gina (not her real name) living with the lawyer's parents in Isabela. The girl has invisible playmates in school, sees the dead husband of her tutor standing beside her, and sees other spirits in the house.

According to the aunt, Gina "is a consistent first honor (student) in her class, is very religious, reads the Bible and prays the rosary a lot, which is very surprising for her age. It is her religiosity that seems to be her refuge whenever she sees things."

Neither her parents nor Gina's brother shares her gifts, so they are scared whenever she begins to see things around them.

Scary but exciting

Yes, it can be very scary and unnerving to be with psychically gifted children, but it can also be very exciting. Conventional science has no idea how to deal with such people, neither does orthodox religion. What such gifted children are able to do are beyond these two disciplines' accepted paradigms.

In my book "The Psychic World and You" (published by De La Salle Press), I wrote a chapter on "Understanding the Psychic Child." In it, I gave some pointers on how to deal with the psychically gifted child.

First, parents should know the distinction between what is merely psychological and what is psychic.

What is psychological is inside us. They are composed of personal feelings, memories and other mainly subjective elements. The psychic world is independent of us. It is like the physical world. It is out there. It does not originate in our own personal history or background, and it is capable of objective verification.

Second, parents should make a distinction between what is ordinary misbehavior and behavior arising from genuine extrasensory perception of the child.

Although there are no cut and dried rules on how to deal with psychic children, the battle is half won, according to one foreign expert, if the child can be encouraged to talk about himself and what he sees or hears, with the assurance that he will not be criticized or ridiculed.

The worst thing that parents can do is to tell the child that he is only imagining things and leave it at that.

Address letters to this column to Prince Plaza I, 106 Legazpi St., Legazpi Village, Makati City. Call 8107245 or 8926806 for information on seminars I conduct. E-mail: jlicauco@edsamail.com.ph. Visit my website at http://jlicauco.shorturl.com. Listen to my DZMM radio program 7-8 p.m. every Sunday.

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What vaccines would I need if I am exposed to rabies? What is the schedule of rabies vaccination?

Vaccination against rabies requires both active and passive immunization. Passive immunization provides for the immediate protection and usually lasts for an average of three weeks. This vaccine, also known as an immunoglobulin (antibody), is available in two types: the Equine Rabies Immunoglobulin (ERIG) derived from horses and the Human Rabies Immunoglobulin (HRIG). The ERIG vaccine, given at 40 units per kilogram body weight, being derived from horses has a higher incidence for allergic reactions. HRIG is given at a dose of 20 units per kilogram body weight. This vaccine is less likely to result to allergic complications but is however more expensive.

Active immunization requires seven to 10 days from the first injection to develop adequate anti-rabies protection and may last for about 2 years if the course is completed. This type of vaccine is given at a dose of 1 ml at day 0, 3, 7, 14 and 30 days from the 1st inoculation.

Rabies is 100% fatal once symptoms develop, hence it is imperative to seek immediate medical attention if rabies infection is suspected.

Dr. Alvin A. Delos Santos, MEDICard accredited doctor at the Cagayan Valley Sanitarium and Hospital, provides us with this week's discussion on rabies vaccination. Dr. Delos Santos, more commonly referred to as Doc Alvin by his patients, earned his medical degree at the Bicol Christian College in 1990. Thereafter, he pursued specialization in Internal Medicine, finishing his post-graduate residency at the Manila Adventist Medical Center. He is a member of the Philippine College of Physicians and has been taking care of MEDICard members' needs since 1997. Visit Doc Alvin for consultation services at Room 6, from Tuesdays to Fridays and on Sundays, 9 AM up to 12 noon and again from 2 up to 5 in the afternoon.

MEDICard's Medical Director, Dr. Nicky Montoya answers questions on health through the assistance and expertise of MEDICard's network of accredited specialists. Write to Dr. Nicky or E-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com for your inquiries on health matters.

Nicky

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The birthing room has plasma television, DVD player, stereo, computer with Internet access, refrigerator and bassinet, among others.

New delivery facility

ST. Luke's Medical Center (SLMC), recognized as one of the most mother-baby friendly hospitals in the country, has a new facility for natural delivery.

Called The Birthing Room, the facility is designed to promote the safety and well-being of women and their newborn, as well as provide comfort for other members of the family. The room is designed with the Lamaze method in mind.

Dr. Pilar Lagman-Dy, chair of SLMC's Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, says a child's birth is an important family event that should involve both parents.

Medical specialists, nurses and other hospital people were consulted in setting up the birthing room. Research was also done on similar facilities in the United States, where the concept has been adopted since the 1980s.

A distinct advantage of the birthing room is that it allows the patient to stay in just one bed throughout her hospital stay—from labor to post-delivery recovery. Right now, women are transferred from her room to the labor room, then delivery room and recovery room, before being returned to her original hospital room.

The birthing room is equipped with a special bed that can be converted into a delivery bed. At the back of the bed are medical equipment needed for safe delivery.

Though women staying in the birthing room have the option to deliver under anesthesia, natural delivery is encouraged. Call 7275542/7231212.

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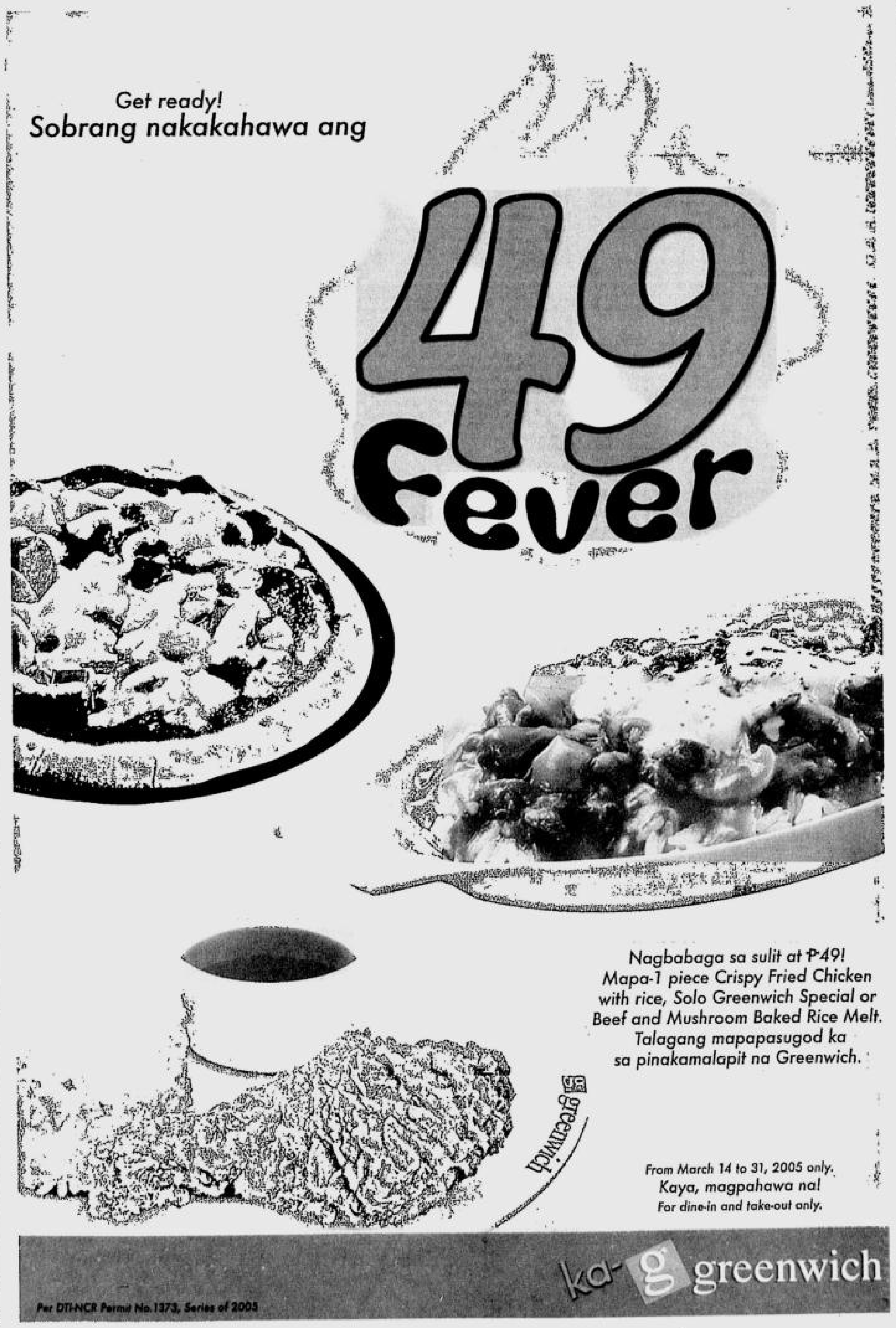

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No.1373, Series of 2005

Low-calorie food guide

First of two parts

WELL AND GOOD
Tina Juan

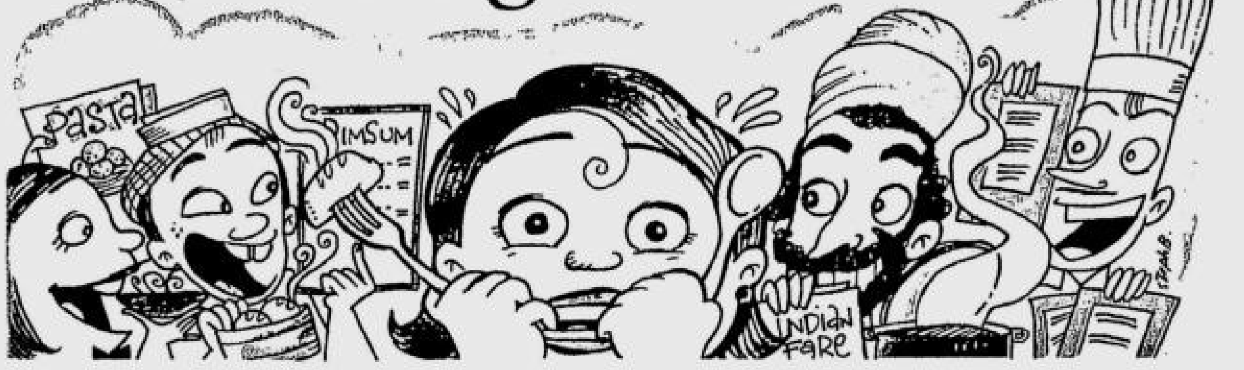
A READER writes:

"I am a working girl who is trying to get back in shape. I can't always bring a pack lunch from home. What are some of the restaurants/fast food chains we can go to that offer more healthful cuisine?

Do you have any helpful hints when looking at a menu? And what are our most healthful bets when ordering Filipino/Japanese/Chinese/Italian/American/Indian dishes?"

Yes, it is possible to eat out and still maintain your weight. You just have to make lower calorie choices. Nutritionist Joy Bauer, author of "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Eating Smart", shows how to dine out without guilt.

But don't think you can eat double or triple portions just because you have chosen food from the lower calorie list. All excess calories end up in your hips, thighs or abdomen. Eat moderately and enjoy your food.



Chinese food

Lower calorie items
Hot and sour soup
Wonton soup
Steamed dumplings (vegetable, chicken or seafood)
Stir-fried or steamed chicken, beef, seafood, tofu, vegetables
Steamed whole fish
Moo-shu vegetables (with pancake roll-ups)
Steamed brown or white rice
Fortune cookies
Lychee nuts
Orange and pineapple slices

Higher calorie items
Egg drop soup, egg rolls, egg fu yung
Fried dumplings and wonton
Fried rice
Cold noodles with sesame sauce
Moo-shu pork
Sweet and sour pork
Fried chicken and seafood dishes
Seafood with lobster sauce
Spare ribs
Roasted duck or goose

French food

Lower calorie items
Steamed mussels
Consomme
Endive and watercress salads
Nicoise salads
Poached or steamed fish
Lightly sauteed vegetables
Bouillabaisse
Chicken in wine sauce
French bread and baguettes
Flambé-d cherries
Peaches in wine
Fresh and poached fruit
Fruit sorbet
Wine, in moderation

Higher calorie items
Appetizers with olives, anchovies or capers
Quiche
French onion soup with cheese
Cream-based soups
Paté, fondue, crepes, brioche
Duck or goose with skin
Anything with Bearnaise, Hollandaise, Bechamel or Mornay Sauce
Anything with the word "cream" or "au gratin"
Chocolate mousse
Crème caramel
Croissants
Pastries and eclairs

Indian food

Lower calorie items
Tamata salat
Mulligatawny soup
Chicken or beef tikka
Tandoori chicken, beef or fish
Chicken, beef and fish saag or vandaloo
Shish kabob
Gobhi matar tamatar
Matar pulao
Steamed rice
Papadum or papad
Coriander, tamarind, and yogurt-based sauces
Chapati
Naan
Kulcha
Mango, mint and onion chutney

Higher calorie items
Anything made with Ghee
Coconut soups
Samosas
Korma
Curries made with coconut milk or cream
Pakora
Saaq paneer
Creamy rice dishes
Fried breads
Honeyed pastries

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Tuition fee includes ingredients, manual, aprons, chef's jacket and chef's kit.
For more information call 726-5316 or 412 7792 and ask Lirio & Rita.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

April 4 (Monday) 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. (classroom A) SOUTH BEACH DIET PHASE 2 & 3 by: Jacqueline H. Alleje, owner of Rizal Dairy Farm, Swiss-Pinoy restaurateur (Vieux Chalet Swiss restaurant), organic caterer and food consultant (Petra's naturally green, global, gourmet) * South Beach Diet Phase 2 continues the discussion on the diet & healthy nutrition with recipes of Stage II. Participants will share their experience from stage I. South Beach Diet Phase 3 is the introduction to the most liberal stage of the diet. Complete meal plan & discussion on how to create your own recipes by including your favorite dishes in your diet. Inclusive of complete menu plan recipes and cooking demo. P3,500

April 4-7 (Monday – Thursday) 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) NEW CLASS! CHOCOLATE WORKSHOP By: Chef Vicky Villanueva & Chef Glenda Wee, from Stars & Bizu, this dynamic duo bring their wealth of knowledge and experience of patisserie and restaurant concepts, skills, techniques & operative. * (DAY 1) Chocolate Appreciation: History, Chocolate Production from bean to bar, Different kinds and forms of chocolate around the world. Storage & Handling, Judging & evaluating chocolate and Uses & application of chocolate in pastry; (DAY 2 & 3) Chocolate Tempering & Artistry: Proper ways of melting chocolate, Different kinds of tempering techniques, Techniques in chocolate decorations: coloring, spraying, piping, praline moulds, acetate & transfer sheets: (DAY 4) Chocolate Confectionery: Assorted pralines and truffles using flavored ganache & Chocolate bars, mendiants, coated chocolate nuts. Lecture, demonstration & hands-on production. P10,000

April 5 (Tuesday) 10:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. (classroom A) DIFFERENT CHOCOLATE CAKES by: Chef Jacqueline Ang Po, Pastry Chef of Fleur de Lys Patisserie, dean's list graduate, California Culinary Academy * Chocolate Fudge Cake, Flourless Chocolate Walnut Cake, Sachertorte, German Chocolate Cake and Warm Chocolate Souffle Cake. P1,500

April 6 Wednesday) 9:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. (classroom A) BASIC CAKES & ICINGS FOR BEGINNERS by: Heny Sison * Butter Cake with Butter Icing, Moist Chocolate Cake with Fudge Icing, Mocha Cake with No-Melt Butter Icing, Lemon Chiffon Cake with Boiled Icing & Sponge Cake with Whipped Cream Icing. P1,500

April 6 (Wednesday) 2:00 – 5:00 p.m. (classroom) A PASTA GALORE by: Chef Aileen Anastacio-Sandoval, owner of Goodies N' Sweet Bakeshop & C'est Si Bon, Dean's list graduate of Culinary at the California Culinary Academy "Learn all-time favorites pasta dishes. Recipes: Pasta Puttanesca, Pasta Carbonara, Spaghetti with Meatballs Seafood Pasta with Tomato Cream and Vongole. P1,700

April 7 (Thursday) 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) NEW CLASS! FAVORITE CHINESE FASTFOOD DISHES by: Chef Katherine Sion, restaurateur (Ding Hao & Fat Kat restaurant), caterer and an expert in Chinese cuisine. * Sweet & Sour Pork, Pinsec Frito, Steamed Chicken w/ Mushroom & Rice, Beef Curry Rice, Beef Pares, Lechon Macau, Sauteed Vegetables w/ Oyster Sauce and Sauteed Kangkong w/ Bagoong Sauce. P2,500

April 8 (Friday) 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) NEW CLASS! NORTHERN LUZON POPULAR KAKANIN by: Chef Carol Acosta, food consultant to multinational food companies & restaurants. * Original Sapin Sapin with Kakang Gata, Ilocano Tupig with Buko and Black Sesame, Coconut Carioca with Caramel, Empanadas (Rice Ground) with Veggies, Kalamay Ube with Latik and Alfajol with Pearl Ball. P1,500

April 8 (Friday) 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) BAKING I by: Heny Sison* Super Moist Chocolate Cake with Mocha Filling & Fudge Icing, Pecan Tassies, Macapuno Bars, Crispy Sylvanna, Cream Puff with Caramel Topping, Lemon Pie, Butterscotch Bars & Sables. P1,500

April 9 (Saturday) 9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) BASIC FLOWER ARRANGEMENT by: Glenn Remorca, floral designer * Learn the theories, styles, trends, techniques, sourcing, flower care & maintenance, basic form, arrangements and flower for wedding. Lecture, demonstration and hands-on production. Bring a pair of scissors. P2,500

April 9 (Saturday) 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) BAKED PASTA by: Chef Jill Sandique, Food Consultant & Food Stylist, Blue Ribbon graduate at Peter Kumps New York Cooking School * Classic Lasagne, Manicotti, Chicken Mushroom and Ham Casserole, Baked Macaroni, Penne with Seafood and Asparagus. P1,700

April 11 (Monday) 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. (classroom A) NEW CLASS! HEALTHY SNACKS & FOOD TO GO (For Mother-Daughter or Mother-Son) by: Jacqueline H. Alleje, * Healthy and light "Easy-to-do-recipes" for summer outings and for "baon" throughout the year. Grilled Vegetables-Kesong Puti on Farmer's bread Ricotta-Pesto, chicken breast with mustard sauce, Euporean Sausages in a (puff pastry) coat Swiss Cheesecake (ramequin), Sweet potato salad, organic mixed greens, carrot with calamansi vinaigrette, green beans ceviche and Ube pudding squares. P3,000

April 11 – 15 (Monday – Friday) 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) NEW CLASS! FRENCH GATEAUX by: Chef Vicky Villanueva & Chef Glenda Wee * DAY 1: Introduction to French gateaux tools and equipment, ingredients, cake architecture; Basic French Bases: Almond sponge & Biscuit Cuillere; DAY 2: Genoise, Biscuit Jaconde, Decorated Sponge: Plain cigarette paste & Chocolate cigarette paste, Coffee cigarette paste & decorating sponge; DAY 3: Chocolate Glaze, Chocolate Mirror Glaze, Fruity Glazes and syrups; DAY 4: Garnishes: Chocolate, cooked and baked garnishes; DAY 5: Mousses and Cake Assembly. P12,500

April 12 (Tuesday) 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) HOMEMADE SAUSAGES, CONDIMENTS & MARINADE WORKSHOP by: Chef Jane Paredes, Food Consultant, trained at the Culinary Institute of America Hyde Park, New York and Peter Kump's New York Cooking School * Discover ways to transform meat, poultry & seafood into profitable menu items. SAUSAGES: Chorizo Bilbao, Longanisa Ilongga, Italian Sausage, Seafood Sausage & Mexican Sausage; CONDIMENTS: Honey-Mustard Sauce, Sweet Pickles Chips & Atchara; MARINADE: Homemade Tapa, Homemade Bulgogi & Tocino; DISHES: Sausage, Sauerkraut & Potato Casserole & Country Style Pork & Beans. P2,500

April 13 (Wednesday) 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. (classroom A) CHILDREN'S BAKING I by: Chef Jill Sandique * Chocolate Crackles, Fudgy Brownies, Lemon Pie, Snickerdoodles, Oatmeal Raisin Cookies and Chocolate Chip Cookies. P1,500

April 14 (Thursday) 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. (classroom A) CHILDREN'S BAKING II by: Chef Jill Sandique * Honey Crunchies, Gingersnaps, Orange Squares, Chocolate Chunks, Easy Oreo Cheesecake and Cathedral Window. P1,500

April 15 (Friday) 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) BREAD BAKING BASICS: A WORKSHOP by: Heny Sison * This hands-on workshop is for the passionate bread baker! You will work with yeasted breads and expect to master the techniques of bread baking. Recipes include: Ensaymada, Pan de Sal, Pan Americano, Spanish Bread, Cheeserolls, French Bread & Breadsticks. P2,500

April 16 (Saturday) 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) DOUGHNUT WORKSHOP by: Chef Jane Paredes * Recipes: Sugar, Honey – Glazed, Caramel Pecan, Chocolate Nut, Mango Glazed, Chocolate Bavarian, Blueberry Filled, Strawberry Filled, Apple Filled, Twist Cinnamon Sugar, Dulce de Leche, Cream Cheese Honey, Boston Cream, Sour Cream Cake Doughnut & Creamy Glazed. P 2,500

April 16 (Saturday) 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. (classroom B) PIZZA CLASS WORKSHOP by: Chef Giorgio Bucciarelli, Master Pizzaiolo & Barista, food consultant of various Italian restaurants all over Metro Manila, graduated at Culinary Institute, Milan, Italy * In this class you will learn the history, concept and design of pizza making. Learn how to make pizza dough, tomato base sauce, white sauce base, preparation, set up pizza counter, know the ingredients and toppings. Recipes: Margherita, Napoli Classica, 4 Formaggi, Pizza Vegetariana, La Gibiana, Piccantina, 4 Stagioni, Calzone & Frutti di Mare. Demonstration with student participation. P2,500

April 18 – 22 (classroom B) 25 – 29 (classroom A) (Monday – Friday) 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. MASTER IN CAKE DECORATION / BASIC by: Heny Sison* A 10-day practical basic cake decorating designed for shop owner, teacher, baker, chef and enthusiast. Includes fancy borders, over 20 icing flowers, color flow, method of printing & script, sugar molding, flower bunching, figure piping, decorated cookies, birthday & wedding cake assembly. Full participation. P16,000

April 18 (Monday) 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) INTRODUCTION TO JAPANESE COOKING: WORKSHOP by: Chef Koichi Kondo, licensed cook from Ehime, Japan and food consultant to various Japanese restaurants * Learn all-time favorites Japanese dishes applicable to home & professional cooking such as: Sushi, Sashimi, Miso Soup, Tempura, Teriyaki, Udon Noodles in Clay Pot, Chicken Teriyaki & Japanese Fried Rice. P2,500

April 19 (Tuesday) 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) CHILDREN COOKING by: Chef Jill Sandique* Baked Chicken Drumsticks with Mashed Potatoes and Gravy, Spaghetti with Meat Sauce, Cheese Pimento Pinwheels, Ice Cream Sundae with Homemade Butterscotch and Hot Fudge. P1,500

April 20 (Wednesday) 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) COFFEE CLASS by: Chef Aileen Anastacio Sandoval * If you are planning to open a coffee shop this course is for you. Learn the four fundamentals of coffee brewing, home espresso, guide to steaming & foaming. Make fun toppings & garnishes & master the art of coffee making. Recipes: Caffè Latte, Caffè Mocha, Caffè Americano, Cappuccino, Espresso Macchiato & Espresso Con Panna, Almond Coffee Freeze, Icy Rum Coffee Cream, Toffee Coffee, Mudslide Malt, Mocha Rumba, Rocky Road and more! P3,000

April 21 (Thursday) 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) BURGERS & STEAKS by: Chef Jane Paredes* Burgers: Italian Burger, Tex Mex Burger, Chicken Burger, Crab Cake Burger & Traditional Beef Burger * Steaks: Rib-eye, Tenderloin & T-bone *Sauces: Bercy, Green Peppercorn Sauce & Café de Paris* Sidings: Potato Gratin & Potato Puree. P2,500

April 22 (Friday) 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) NEW CLASS! CHINESE SEAFOODS SPECIAL by: Chef Katherine Sion * Spinach with Seafood Soup, Crab with Sotanghon, Baked Shrimp with Garlic, Steamed Lapu Lapu with Tausi Sauce, Saute Scallop with Fresh Asparagus, Saute Shellfish with Tausi Sauce, Braised Beancurd with Seafood Hot Pot and Seafood Chow Fan. P2,500

April 23 (Saturday) 9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) SPECIAL FLOWER ARRANGEMENT by: Glenn Remorca * Learn the different styles of table arrangement & home decors. Demonstration and hands-on production. P3,000

April 23 (Saturday) 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) FRESH PASTA WORKSHOP by: Chef Giorgio Bucciarelli * Learn how to make pasta egg dough, green spinach dough, black pasta dough, different kinds of pastas: lasagna, green lasagna, ravioli, tortellini, cannelloni, fettuccine: green & black, stuffings for ravioli, tortellini and cannelloni. Sauces for lasagna, tortellini, ravioli & cannelloni. Recipes: Lasagna alla Bolognese, Lasagna ai 4 Formaggi, Lasagna al Pesto, Cannelloni alla Ricotta and Spinaci, Ravioli alla Boscaiola al Burro e Salvia, Tortellini ai 4 Formaggi, alla Panna Prosciutto e Funghi, Green Fettuccine alla Montanara, Black Fettuccine al Frutti di Mare. Demonstration with student participation. P2,500

April 25 (Monday) 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) PATTIES & TURNOVERS (Demo-Workshop) by: Chef Jill Sandique * Indian Samosas, Jamaican Beef Patties, Cuban Empanadas, Chicken Mushroom Turnover & Stromboli plus bonus recipe. P2,500

April 26 – 30 (Tuesday – Saturday) 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom B) NEW CLASS! PETITE FOURS by: Chef Vicky Villanueva & Chef Glenda Wee* DAY 1: Puff Pastry & Pastry Cream; DAY 2: Puff Make Up, Baking and Assembly: Millefeuille, Jalousie & Turnover; DAY 3: Pate a Choux: Profiteroles, éclair, St. Honore, Religuese & Paris Breast; DAY 4: Tuile Decoration, Decorating syrups and sauce & Dried Fruits decorations and DAY 5: Plated Desserts. Lecture, demonstration & hands-on production. P12,500

April 30 (Saturday) 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (classroom A) SECRETS NO MORE! by: Heny Sison* Decadent Chocolate Cake with Fudge Icing & Caramel Sauce, Lemon Torte, Ensaymada, Almond Sansrival, Strawberry Shortcake & Ube Cake. P3,000

TUITION FEE includes ingredients.
Reservation is required.
WEDDING & BIRTHDAY CAKE orders by appointment only. We sell Cake Decorating, Confectionery and Baking Supplies.

FOR RESERVATIONS & INQUIRIES visit or call us at:
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EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Prone wide row on stability ball

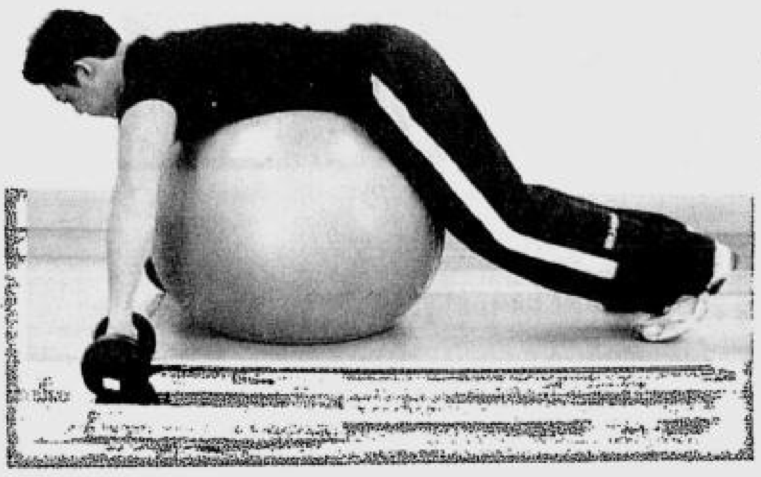
THIS exercise strengthens the back of the shoulders as well as the middle back.

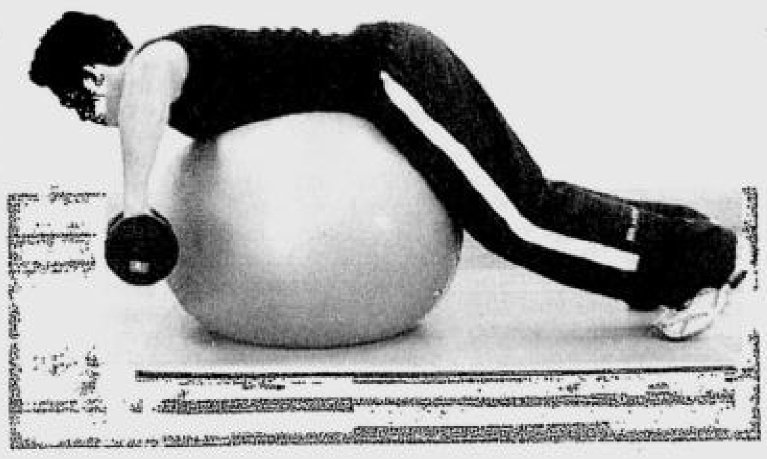
Equipment
Dumbbells and stability ball

Exercise technique
1. Kneel down with the ball in front of you.
2. Place your torso on the ball and roll forward until you have both hands on the floor. Your legs should be straight behind you on your toes.
3. Hold one dumbbell in each hand. Lift to shoulder level.
4. Slowly lower down. Do the desired number of repetitions.

Performance tips
1. Exhale as you lift the dumbbells; inhale as you bring them down.
2. Focus on lifting the dumbbells by contracting the muscles at the back of the shoulders and between the shoulder blades.
3. Make sure elbows stay facing the side rather than facing backwards.
4. Look down at the floor and keep your neck in line with your spine.
5. Avoid lifting beyond shoulder level so there is less stress on the shoulder joint.

Repetitions
12 to 15 repetitions





Free medical checkup

BETTER Herbs Inc., maker of Leizenzi (Better Sleep), Banaba-Ampalaya and Choleste-Redux natural food supplements, has launched a free medical checkup program as part of its corporate mission.

Medical director Dr. Ramon Angeles will be available for free consultations on sleep disorder, poor blood circulation, prostate cancer and other ailments 2-5 p.m., Monday and Tuesday, Unit 1033 V.V. Soliven Bldg., Edsa, San Juan. Call 7214376/7234376.

Better Herbs Leizenzi and Choleste-Redux are available at Mercury Drug, Watsons and other leading drugstores. Banaba-Ampalaya can be bought at Watsons and other leading drugstores.

Better Herbs Inc. received last year the Asia Pacific Excellence Award for Leizenzi (Better Sleep), cited as an innovative product for insomnia.

Choosing life

MARITONI Fernandez talks about her decision to keep her baby despite having breast cancer in the latest issue of Moms&Babies.

Noted pediatrician Dr. Cynthia Cuayo Juico separates the truth from myth in "Newborn care, the Pinoy way". She talks about how the popular practice of giving newborns *ampalaya* juice to remove the *sawan* or meconium (stool) may be harmful to the infant.

Tessa Prieto Valdes reveals a rare serious side in "The Best Lessons" her mother, Philippine Daily Inquirer chair Marixi Prieto, taught her.

Read the complete articles in the March issue of Moms&Babies, available in all bookstores, newsstands, and retail outlets nationwide. Call 8860333 local 115 or e-mail enquiry.ph@asia.cmpmedica.com.